COUR INTERNATIONALE DE JUSTICE

AFFAIRE RELATIVE AUX ACTIVITÉS ARMÉES SUR LE TERRITOIRE DU CONGO

(RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO c. OUGANDA)

RÉPLIQUE

DE

LA RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO

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Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)

Great Lakes: IRIN Weekly Round Up 37, 12/2/96

UNITEDNATIONS
Department of Humanitarian Affairs
Integrated Regional Information Network

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This is number 37 in a series of weekly reports from IRIN on general developments in the Great Lakes region. Sources for the information below include UN agencies, NGOs, other international organisations and media reports. IRIN issues these reports for the benefit of the humanitarian community, but accepts no responsibility as to the accuracy of the original sources.

Weekly Roundup of Main Events in the Great Lakes region
25 November - 1 December 1996

WFP on Wednesday signalled the possible start of another large refugee influx into Gisenyi after about 10.000 refugees crossed over from Goma into Gisenyi. It said this was the highest number for several days. On Friday, another batch of 6,500 refugees arrived in Gisenyi. Attempts to help some 40,000 refugees in the Minova area were frustrated by renewed fighting on Friday. According to WFP, a way-station two kilometres outside Minova for refugees travelling to Rwanda, had to be abandoned. In South Kivu, UNHCR said at least 5,229 refugees had so far been repatriated to Rwanda through Bukavu and Cyangugu this month, with average daily repatriation last week of 600. Most of the first batch of returnees are now back in their communes.

Plans for air-dropping food into eastern Zaire were treated with caution, after many aid agencies criticised the proposal. Reuters said aid workers poured scorn on the plan as "expensive, dangerous and full of holes". Other critics pointed out that air-drops would depend on getting access for ground personnel and good intelligence on the whereabouts of the refugees - the very lack of these being a main reason why significant humanitarian operations have been unable to go ahead in eastern Zaire since the start of the conflict. According to Canadian sources, however, the plans for parachuting food over Zaire from a base in neighouring Uganda is mainly a "demonstration of readiness". The head of the proposed multi-national force Lieutenant General Maurice Baril, speaking in Kigali, said the air drops are "complex, dangerous and very difficult - something to use only as a last resort", AFP reported. Zaire expressed fierce opposition to the air-drops, while Rwanda objected to Entebbe being used as a base.

AFP reported that the 20 countries which form the multi-national force formally approved its establishment on Friday. Paul Heinbecker, the senior Canadian official who chaired Friday's meeting in Ottawa announced that the MNF was approved, with its headquarters to be in Entebbe. Heinbecker also said that it had been agreed to form a Steering Committee of 14 countries to make operational decisions on the recommendation of Lt Gen Maurice Baril. The Committee would meet in New York from now on and report to the UN Security Council. The members of the Committee are: Belgium, Cameroon, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Britain, the United States, Uganda and Canada. Canadian premier Jean Chretien said on Friday that Baril had secured the collaboration of rebel leader Laurent Kabila following talks in Goma.

The Ugandan army captured Kasindi and Virunga Hills 10kms into Zaire on Friday, after a counter-attack to repulse Zaire-based Ugandan rebels launching assaults on Kasese in western

Uganda, the state-owned New Vision reported. The Zairean army also accused Ugandan troops of taking the town of Beni, north of Goma, on Saturday although a Ugandan minister, speaking on BBC radio today (Monday), denied the allegation. Earlier in the week, Zairean troops were reported to have fled north from the rebel-captured town of Butembo, towards Beni and Bunia, pillaging and looting en route. Unconfirmed reports said Zairean troop reinforcements had been flown to Beni from Kisangani. [for more details see IRIN daily updates].

Zaire recalled its ambassador to France on Sunday after he was involved in a car accident in which two children were killed. Ambassador Ramazani Baya was driving his car at high speed through the southern French town of Menton on Wednesday, after visiting President Mobutu in his Riviera villa, and hit the boys on a pedestrian crossing. Thousands of mourners filed silently in commemoration of the boys through Menton's streets on Saturday.

As the situation in eastern Zaire continued to overshadow events in Burundi, news trickled out of intensified fighting there between the Tutsi-dominated army and Hutu rebels. A spokesman for the National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD) said rebels had stepped up their guerrilla campaign and fierce fighting was raging in five main provinces - Kayanza, Bujumbura Rurale, Bururi, Rutana and Ruyigi. Innocent Nimpagaritse, CNDD's East Africa representative, said the clashes were a "massive show of force ... to prove to all that we are alive, active and firmly in control of the main provinces." WFP on Sunday confirmed that the fighting had displaced thousands of people and caused serious food shortages. The previous day WFP reported that it had been allowed by the sanctions committee to resume food deliveries - 2,545 mt per month - to the embattled country, despite the regional economic embargo imposed after the July military coup. WFP said that due to the "dramatic escalation" in the Burundi conflict over the past weeks, the number of displaced people had nearly doubled to about 80,000, and its existing food stocks in the country were practically exhausted.

On Monday (25 November), Tanzania reiterated that regional leaders would only lift the sanctions if Burundian president Pierre Buyoya agreed to talk to all parties in the conflict, including CNDD rebels. Uganda's foreign ministry said a press report giving the impression that Kampala backed an end to the embargo was "erroneous and incorrect". In a statement, the ministry clarified that Ugandan leader Yoweri Museveni, during a meeting with Buyoya, had told him supplies such as medicines and fertilizers should be allowed into the country, but that he did not support a total easing of the blockade.

The Burundian leader is expected to attend a meeting on the Great Lakes situation, convened by Congo in Brazzaville today (Monday 2 December), after being excluded from previous regional gatherings. Before departing on Sunday, he said the thrust of his message to the meeting would be problems caused by the sanctions and the current situation in the country. Earlier, in an apparent attempt to defuse tension, Buyoya, announced he was looking into reports of an army massacre at a church in the volatile northwest Cibitoke province. Prime Minister Pascal-Firmin Ndimira had strenuously denied that soldiers were responsible for the murder of over 300 returnees from Zaire, but Buyoya told a news conference he was "in the process of seeking the details."

Burundi national radio on Sunday reported that four people were killed and five injured when fighting and gunfire broke out at a displaced people's camp in Bujumbura's Kamenge suburb. According to the radio, casualties would have been even higher "if soldiers in charge of security at the camp had not intervened." Elsewhere in the country, ambushes are reported to be rife along RN3, the main road from Bujumbura south to Rumonge, which is now considered one of the most dangerous in Burundi. Skirmishes have been reported in the vicinity of Nyanza Lac in Makamba province.

The Burundi government has redrawn the administrative structures in five provinces, affected recently by rebel attacks, according to DHA in Bujumbura. Interior Minister Epitace Bayaganakandi

explained that the restructuring will provide the military authorities with greater control over access and administration in selected communes of Kayanza, Gitega, Muramvya, Karuzi and Bujumbura-Rurale. The authorities are also permitting limited fishing in Lake Tanganyika, provided fishermen give advance notice and undergo a search of their boat when they return to shore. Fishing had previously been forbidden as the authorities were afraid Hutu rebels could infiltrate the country posing as fishermen.

A cabinet meeting on Tuesday, chaired by Buyoya, decided to impose war contributions on all citizens depending on their income. For government ministers, the amount was set at 25,000 Burundi francs. Those people unable to contribute financially would be required to render other services, without payment.

Amnesty International raised concern over the fate of several prisoners allegedly taken from jail in Muyinga province by the security forces to be tried in their villages. AI says none of the prisoners has been seen since they were taken on 27 November and it is afraid they are at risk of extrajudicial execution. It urged the authorities to establish the whereabouts of the prisoners and take steps to guarantee their safety.

More than 95,600 refugees from Zaire and Burundi are reported by UNHCR to have arrived this month in Tanzania's Kigoma and Kibondo districts. Of the arrivals, 30,000 were Zairean refugees and about 1,500 Burundian refugees from Zaire - the rest came directly from Burundi. WFP raised concern over the poor nutritional state of the new arrivals from Burundi. It said the malnutrition rate for children under five was almost 19 percent at the Mtendeli camp which had received some 40,000 new Burundian refugees since the beginning of November. Tanzania now hosts more than 755,000 refugees, including 535,000 Rwandans and 189,000 Burundians. More than 59,000 Burundian refugees have returned to Burundi from Zaire since early November. This figure includes 15,377 who arrived through the Gatumba transit centre outside Bujumbura.

UNHCR says the number also includes some 44,000 who came spontaneously to the Cibitoke region. UNHCR reports that a team visited Cibitoke on Wednesday and travelled to the Rwandan border, where they saw groups of returnees and displaced people in poor health. In Uganda, UNHCR reports an average of 40 people a day continuing to arrive in southwestern Uganda. Some 11,597 mostly Zairean refugees are in the region, including 8,094 at Kisoro and 3,503 at Matanda.

According to a report issued by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Zairean refugees in Kigoma, Tanzania rioted earlier this week over a shortage of plastic sheeting. The following day there was a riot over lack of blankets. During this disturbance, the Kigoma Regional Commissioner was attacked and promptly ordered all Zairean refugees to be repatriated. The USAID report said UNHCR is holding discussions with the Commission to have this decision rescinded.

Aid workers in Rwanda were predicting a new massive influx of refugees from Tanzania within a matter of weeks. A UN official, quoted by AFP, said contingency plans had been prepared and conceded that the return would probably be a sudden surge. The official also pointed out that in Tanzania "there is a government which is in control, where is the rule of law, and an army, which there wasn't in Zaire." He added that the camps in Tanzania were set further back from the Rwanda border, which would give aid agencies more time to rush supplies and personnel to the region. However only a trickle of returnees is currently reported.

A UN spokeswoman in Geneva on Friday reported the killng of three civilians by former Rwandan soldiers in Giseki, Gisenyi. One was a genocide survivor. So far 38 ex-FAR have been arrested in Rwanda since the mass return of refugees earlier this month. A press release issued by the exiled Rally for the Return of Refugees and Democracy in Rwanda (RDR) accused the Rwandan army of killing over 6,400 refugees since the "invasion" of eastern Zaire. It said the biggest number of casualties was in the Bukavu area "where RPA entered with a list of over 1,000 former politicians,

intellectuals and members of various refugee organisations, as well as churchmen, to be killed."

Two former Rwandan mayors, accused of involvement in the country's genocide in 1994, pleaded not guilty before the UN war crimes court in Arusha, Tanzania, on Friday. Elie Ndayambaje, former mayor of Muganza, and Joseph Kanyabashi, former mayor of Ngoma, entered their pleas at a preliminary hearing and their trials were set for later next year.

Ugandan Foreign Minister Eriya Kategaya, speaking before a parliamentary committee hearing on the war in the north this week, again stressed his country's "moral" support for the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), adding, regarding the war in the north, that "our neighbours have tried to make sure that we do not succeed". Sudan's Culture and Information Minister Brig Dr Tayyib Ibrahim Muhammad Khayr, meanwhile, stressed his country's commitment to the accord signed with Uganda aimed at normalising bilateral ties. According to a report broadcast by Sudanese radio, he denied Khartoum was behind the incursion into Uganda by Zaire-based rebels.

Uganda's presidential adviser for defence called for a referendum on the future of the government if it failed to resolve the northern rebellion, according to press reports on Saturday. Maj Gen David Tinyefuza told the parliamentary committee that if the government was unable to end the war militarily, then it should talk to or even pardon Joseph Kony, leader of the rebel Lord's Resistance Army. "If you can't pardon him, then be prepared to be defeated by him and be thrown out," he added. LRA rebels on Friday attacked Unyama village, north of Gulu, abducting over 30 people and forcing 20,000 others to flee their homes, the independent daily Monitor reported on Sunday.

[ENDS]

[Via the UN DHA Integrated Regional Information Network. The material contained in this communication may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. UN DHA IRIN Tel: +254 2 622123 Fax: +254 2 622129 e-mail: irin@dha.unon.org for more information. If you re-print, copy, archive or re-post this item, please retain this credit and disclaimer.]

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Great Lakes: IRIN Weekly Round Up, 12/09/96

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Weekly Roundup of Main Events in the Great Lakes region
2 - 8 December 1996

Reports that the rebels in eastern Zaire had taken control of Bunia, Kindu and Kisangani appear to have been premature. At present, it is clear that the rebels have retained control of Uvira, Bukavu and Goma, where daily life is reported to be returning to normal. They also control Beni, which fell on 30 November. The Zairean authorities accused Uganda of having assisted the rebels in Beni, but the Ugandan Government denied the charge, saying that its troops had only gone to Kasindi (just over the Uganda-Zaire border), in pursuit of Ugandan rebels which had been using the town as their base.

In a briefing for humanitarian agencies in Nairobi on Thursday, Lt Gen Maurice Baril said that aerial surveillance by the multi-national forces (MNF) found no more than 165,000 refugees or displaced people in a 150-km wide stretch of North and South Kivu. The largest group was of 150,000 refugees around Numbi, south west of Goma, but subsequent reports over the weekend suggest this group may be breaking up. Lt Gen Baril also reported that a group of Interahamwe and ex-FAR have been sighted near the town of Walikale, while about 30,000 people believed to be ex-FAR have moved out of range.

Aid agencies, meanwhile, have expressed concern about `missing' Rwandan and Burundian refugees as well as Zairean internally displaced people. The US gives a high estimate that 650,000 Rwandan refugees have returned to Rwanda from Zaire, while 60,000 Burundian refugees are known to have returned to Burundi. Given that the original number of Rwandan refugees in Zaire was believed to be around 1.2 million, with another 140,000 Burundian refugees, this would suggest that some 440,000 Rwandan and 80,000 Burundian refugees remain in Zaire. Meanwhile, the death toll as a result of the fighting in eastern Zaire has been estimated as at least 2,754, according to the Emergency Biodiversity Team (EUB), who have taken responsibility for burying the bodies.

Humanitarian agencies now have a presence in Goma and Bukavu towns, but have little access to surrounding areas. On Tuesday a group of agencies (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, DHA, MSF, ICRC and IFRC) were able to visit Uvira from Bukavu, the first such visit since international staff evacuated on 22 October. They reported that Uvira town was calm, markets had re-opened, and the hospital was functioning relatively normally, but that aid agency offices had been extensively looted.

Meanwhile, expectations of an intervention by the MNF have dimmed. Canada's Defence Minister Doug Young suggested on Friday that the mass return of refugees to Rwanda had vitiated the need

for a military intervention; both he and Lt General Baril have also expressed serious doubts about air drops into eastern Zaire, arguing that they should be a last resort. France, meanwhile, reiterated its support for a multi- national force on Sunday, contradicting comments by Jacques Godfrain, Cooperation Minister, who earlier said it was no longer necessary. In a communique the French Ministry of External Affairs said, `France's position on the implementation of United Nations resolutions on Zaire, notbaly on the deployment of a multinational force, has not changed'.

At the political level, Zairean premier Kengo wa Dondo on Tuesday accused Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi of setting up a `Tutsi empire' and expressed his support for a multi-national force to help Rwandan refugees, at the Congo summit for central african leaders. UN Secretary-General Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali also reiterated his support for a military intervention last week. Raymond Chretien met President Mobutu in southern France on Wednesday, and declared that `Zaire is ready to play its role again and does not intend to use a `empty chair' policy'.

The UNHRFOR has issued a report on the reintegration of Rwandan refugees from Zaire into their home communes stating that, `Overall the mass movement of returnees from the border to their home communes proceeded smoothly and returnees were generally well-received in their communes of origin.' HRFOR states that as of 1 December, 322,964 new returnees are reported to have arrived in their communes of origin and to have been registered by civilian authorities with UNHCR assistance.

But HRFOR expressed concern about `the absence of definitive figures on the number of returnees from Zaire since 15 November', noting that this will `impede considerably the verification of the their arrival in communes of origin'. The UNHCR estimates that around 550,000 Rwandan refugees returned from Zaire during the second half of November.

The HRFOR report states that 162 newly-arrived returnees are reported to have been arrested or detained, while some 4,331 members of the ex-FAR were registered by either military or civilian authorities. Twelve members of the ex-FAR have been arrested. HRFOR also received reports of four separate incidents resulting in the killing of four returnees and two persons associated with them, while also receiving reports that four genocide survivors and two persons associated with them were killed in Gisenyi Prefecture.

The Rwandan justice minister Faustin Nteziryayo met the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, on Saturday to discuss the human rights situation in the country following the mass return of refugees, with the justice minister briefing the high commissioner on measures taken by Rwanda to improve human rights conditions. A meeting on the relief needs of Rwandan returnees will be held on December 13 and 14 in Kigali and will be co-chaired by Canada and Rwanda.

Rwanda has published a list of nearly 1,900 people is accuses of organising and leading the genocide in 1994. The names, which are in alphabetical order and listed by commune and prefecture, are of people suspected of `first degree' involvement in the genocide, making them liable to the death penalty under the terms of new legislation. The list, published last week, includes former ministers, politicians, regional officials, military officers and Hutu militia leaders.

The Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) last week beat off an attack by rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces, who invaded near the border town of Bwera on Wednesday. According to reports in the Government-owned New Vision, people from the area said that 100 rebels had crossed from Zaire. Later reports claimed that 50 rebels were killed in the subsequent fighting, while five UPDF soldiers and eight civilians were injured. The UPDF counter-attack involved them in pursuing the rebels to Kasindi, in Zairean territory.

Earlier in the week Zaire accused the Ugandan army of involvement in the war in Kivu and called on the UN to stop Uganda's armed incursions. In a statement to the Security Council, signed by Zaire's

deputy premier Kamanda wa Kamanda and dated 1 December, Zaire accused the Ugandan army of `involvement in the war which Rwanda is imposing on Zaire' and said that because of its involvement Uganda should be disqualified from serving as a base for the multi-national force. Zaire also denied that it was supporting Ugandan rebels of the Allied Democratic Front (ADF).

Major General David Tinyefuza, Uganda's presidential adviser on defence, is reported to have resigned after making highly critical comments about the Government's handling of the war in the north before a Parliamentary Committee. Tinyefuza said Ugandans should call for a referendum on the future of the Government `if it fails to end the war militarily within a month.' He said that if the war couldn't be ended in that time the Government had to talk to Joseph Kony, leader of the Lords Resistance Army (LRA). Saying that the war was an `economic disaster' for Uganda, he described as `rubbish' claims by some politicians that Kony was not a serious threat. His comments are reported to have incensed senior army officers and he is believed to have been called before a disciplinary hearing before he handed in his resignation.

A different view was expressed last week by Lt-Col Toolit, director of military intelligence, who was also appearing before the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs, which is investigating the war in the north. According to a report on Radio Uganda monitored by the BBC, Lt-Col Toolit said that the war will only come to an end if the politicians and the population come out in unity to denounce rebel activities. Commenting on peace talks as a solution to the war, Lt-Col Toolit said they would only help Joseph Kony to reorganize his acts of banditry.

LRA rebels killed 10 people last week in villages near the northern town of Gulu, according to a report in the New Vision today. The report claimed that four people had been battered to death with hoes, apparently in retaliation for their moving closer to military camps for protection. Several civilians and one Ugandan soldier were also reported to have been abducted by the rebels.

UNHCR and Tanzania began a campaign on Friday urging Rwandan refugees in the camps to return by the end of the year. The message to the 535,000 refugees is being broadcast on local radio, circulated in leaflets in Kinyarwanda and read by workers using loudspeakers. Two way stations are being established on the 30 km road between the camps and the border and there will also be four water points, which will be used to gather children separated from their families.

The total number of people who returned in November was 548; but in recent days numbers have risen substantially. On Tuesday last week 238 refugees returned and on Thursday 274. A statement by the Tanzanian Government and UNHCR encouraging refugees to return has been criticized by UNHCR, who said `it makes no mention of options for those refugees who continue to fear human rights violations on returning to Rwanda'.

However, 15,000 refugees reported to have left the Kagenyi and Rubwere camps in Karagwe region between Friday and Sunday night are reported to have headed north and east instead of west back to Rwanda. Some media accounts report aid workers as having put forward the theory that Hutu hardliners may be organising mass departures in response to the repatriation preparations.

Tanzania hosts about 720,000 refugees, of whom 530,000 are Rwandan and 190,000 Burundian. During November there was a dramatic escalation in the number of refugees arriving in Kigoma, when 100,000 refugees came in, the majority from Burundi. Some of the recent arrivals are Zaireans who have fled the conflict in eastern Zaire, coming by boat across Lake Tanganyika.

The sanctions against Burundi will be the subject of talks to be held in Nairobi next week between Burundi's nighbouring countries, according to a report in the East African. The paper reported Tanzanian Government sources as saying that there is pressure from all over the region to lift the sanctions. Last week a summit meeting for central african leaders in Brazzaville, Congo, called for the lifting of the sanctions, while a meeting of leaders at a Franco-African summit in Ouagadougou,

Burkina Faso, also demanded the lifting of the embargo.

A recent FAO report on the crop and food supply situation in Burundi has drawn attention to the effects of the conflict and the embargo on the country. FAO estimates the food shortfall in 1996 at 53,000 tons of cereals, 69,000 tons of pulses, 181,000 tons of roots and tubers and 123,000 tons of bananas and plantains. Dry spells in April and May and the conflict in Bubanza, Cibitoke and Karuzi provinces - which reduced crop production in these provinces by as much as 50% - are blamed for the shortfalls. The report states that, `[A]s a result of the embargo on food imports, the nutritional status of the population in general and of the internally displaced people and dispersed populations in particular, is likely to be seriously affected.'

WFP has also drawn attention to the extremely serious consequences of the conflict in Burundi, stating that a `dramatic escalation' of the conflict has doubled the number of internally displaced people in Burundi to about 80,000 in the past few weeks. The statement followed WFP's announcement that it has been allowed to resume food deliveries to Burundi, following a decision by the Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee. WFP will now be able to deliver 2,545 tonnes of food aid each month, enough to feed 130,000 people.

[ENDS]

[Via the UN DHA Integrated Regional Information Network. The material contained in this communication may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. UN DHA IRIN Tel: +254 2 622123 Fax: +254 2 622129 e-mail: irin@dha.unon.org for more information. If you re-print, copy, archive or re-post this item, please retain this credit and disclaimer.]

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Great Lakes: IRIN Update 173, 5/16/97

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IRIN Emergency Update No.173 on the Great Lakes (16 May 1997)

* An official statement from Kinshasa today said President Mobutu Sese Seko was giving up power but would retain his title of president. He left the capital for his jungle palace at Gbadolite. CNN quoted diplomatic sources saying Mobutu would make a short stopover there before going on into exile in Morocco. His aides had told him they could no longer guarantee his safety. It was not immediately clear whether Mobutu's demand to retain his title would be acceptable to Laurent-Desire Kabila, leader of the rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL). US State Department officials said the rebels were closing in on the capital and were now within a range of 50 kms. In Paris, AFP quoted Mobutu's personal military adviser, former French army chief-of-staff General Jeannou Lacaze, as saying there would be a "pitched battle" for Kinshasa.

* The Swiss government said today it was impounding Mobutu's $5.6 million villa at Sevigny near Lausanne. Zairean prosecutors have asked for international co-operation to freeze Mobutu's vast assets.

* Zairean immigration workers staged a pay strike yesterday afternoon, halting traffic between Ngobila Beach in Kinshasa and Brazzaville in Congo. They confiscated rubber stamps from the immigration post, demanding the payment of 14 months' salary arrears. Traffic across the river is said to be heavy as people flee Kinshasa or transfer goods to safety. Aid workers say group of 1,300 Malians, mostly women and children, have arrived in Brazzaville from Kinshasa over the last few days. Many are camped at the airport.

* Six barges carrying aid were to leave Brazzaville today for Liranga and Motokipopo, where several thousand Rwandan Hutu refugees who fled Zaire are stranded in swampland. The journey will take a week. The barges are to pick up some 3,000 refugees from Liranga and take them to a site to be determined further south. The Congolese government has not yet made its position regarding the refugees clear, but has asked aid agencies to prepare a plan of action to deal with the problem. Humanitarian sources say the Rwandan refugee population at Loukolelo has increased rapidly from 59 to about 900; and 500 Zaireans have arrived at Ngabe, 200 kms north of the capital.

* Five people died at Owando, northern Congo, in a reprisal attack on supporters of former president Denis Sassou-Nguesso, AFP reported on Thursday. The attackers were avenging the earlier shooting of a soldier by bodyguards of Sassou-Nguesso, who has started a campaign tour of the country but has not said whether he will stand in presidential elections in July.

* UNHCR said today rebel ADFL authorities in eastern Zaire promised they would be able to travel by road to refugee sites south of Biaro on Saturday. UNHCR officials were stopped at Biaro, 42 kms south of Kisangani, earlier this week by rebel soldiers citing insecurity. The authorities say two trains will be organised soon to evacuate refugees from Biaro. Trains are also to run three times a week to Obilo, Km 82.

* The repatriation total of Rwandan refugees from Zaire reached 26,248 on Thursday, UNHCR said. Another 15,000 in Biaro camp and 6,000 at Km 82 camp are waiting to be flown out.

* Humanitarian sources say 63 deaths were recorded among Hutu refugees repatriated from eastern Zaire to the Rwandan capital Kigali over the last two weeks. 53 died at Ruyenzi transit centre and 10 at the central hospital.

* Mohamed Sahnoun, UN/OAU special representative for the Great Lakes, has asked three non-governmental organisations to organise a consultation of experts on the region. Accord, Mwengo and Synergies Africa are looking for experts wishing to participate. Contact Vasu Gounden at Accord, e-mail : info@accord.udw.ac.za or tel. 27-31-2044816, fax 27-31-2044815.

* The Rwandan government this week approved a decree specifying that those sentenced to death for crimes of genocide in 1994 will not be executed in public. No film or photographs may be taken of the executions, which will be carried out between 5 am and 6 pm at the prison where the convict is held and in the town where he or she was sentenced. More than 40 people have been sentenced to death and five have had their appeals rejected since the trials began late last year.

* The UN Security Council expressed concern on Wednesday about deteriorating conditions in Rwandan prisons and the country's poor judicial system. It called on the Rwandan government to make improvements.

* The Ugandan 'Monitor' reports heavy fighting yesterday between the Ugandan army and rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) at Kahindangoma in the Rwenzori mountains. The paper says the army attacked ADF bases killing at least 40 rebels and capturing weapons.

* Uganda has reacted angrily to an article in the French daily 'Le Monde', which said Uganda helped train a "Tutsi legion" of 15,000 fighters behind Zairean rebel leader Laurent Kabila. The Kenyan 'Daily Nation' today quotes a Ugandan security official who dismissed the claim as "naive" and "rubbish."

* UN planes flew to destinations in southern Sudan today for the first time in ten days after the Sudanese government gave fresh authorisation. The control tower in government-held Juba had been denying flight clearance. Aid workers believe the government was trying to stop deliveries of food to areas captured by the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in its latest offensive.

* US Assistant Secretary of State George Moose urged the international isolation of Sudan to force it to "change its domestic and international conduct", AFP reported. ICRC said earlier this week it had started visiting Sudanese prisoners of war being held in Uganda.

* WFP reports normal or better than normal rainfall in virtually all parts of Kenya badly affected by drought. Water catchments have replenished and livestock health improved. WFP has revised downwards by 10% Kenya's 1997 maize imports estimate. However, maize prices remain very high especially in the Rift Valley and Kisumu. Prices have increased by 100-160% since May 1996. WFP drought relief operations continue, with food distributions to badly affected communities and to 450,000 school children.

Nairobi, 16 May 1997, 15:15 gmt

[ENDS]

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Great Lakes: IRIN Update 176, 5/19/97

UNITEDNATIONS

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IRIN Emergency Update No.176 on the Great Lakes (19 May 1997)

* The leadership of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), formerly Zaire, said in Kinshasa today it would set up a constituent assembly within two months to draft a new constitution. Deo Bugera, secretary-general of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL), said the new government would derive its authority from village-level democracy. But correspondents say he did not set a date for elections and evaded the question of whether other political parties would be allowed to participate in the government. Self-proclaimed President Laurent-Desire Kabila remains at his headquarters at Lubumbashi. * Thousands of students marched through the capital Kinshasa today singing and cheering in celebration of the ADFL's victory, AFP reported. The BBC reported some "ugly scenes" of mob justice against looters and soldiers. CNN said soldiers from Mobutu's army who had not surrendered were being hunted down and there were some summary executions. Two newspapers, 'Reference Plus' and 'Potentiel' reappeared on the streets of the capital today. Certain articles urged Kabila to include leading opposition figures in his government and warned that Zaireans were wary of his support from Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, AFP said.

* Uncertainty remains over the whereabouts of ousted President Mobutu Sese Seko. Journalists said the plane that brought him and his entourage to the Togolese capital Lome today took off again hours later without him on board. The plane's destination was not known and the Togolese authorities would neither confirm nor deny Mobutu's presence in Lome. A diplomat at the Zairean embassy in Paris told AFP Mobutu wants to settle at his villa on the French Riviera.

* South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki returned home today saying he was "satisfied" with his meeting yesterday with Kabila in Lubumbashi. He announced that South Africa would recognise the new government. Other countries who followed with their recognition of the new regime include Japan, Iran, Libya, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Sudan.

* The South African news agency SAPA reported today that the South African company De Beers has re-opened its diamond buying office in Mbuji-Mayi. The move signals an apparent change of approach by the ADFL, who last month said they were not happy with De Beers' monopoly position in the diamond industry.

* The UNHCR repatriated 1,975 Rwandan Hutu refugees on Saturday from Kisangani, eastern Zaire, bringing to 30,165 refugees returned to Rwanda. The temporary breakdown of the ferry across the Zaire river prevented a planned humanitarian mission to areas south of Biaro, 42 kms south of Kisangani, where thousands of refugees are believed to be stranded in the jungle.

* The Rally for the Return of Refugees and Democracy in Rwanda (RDR), representing Hutu refugees, today called on the international community to "demand" that the new Zairean authorities accept an inquiry into allegations of massacres of refugees. * UN agencies cancelled a proposed suspension of activities today in eastern Zaire after further talks with the ADFL authorities in Goma. UN security officers are to propose a series of recommendations for approval by the ADFL, which said it would provide a permanent military liaison officer to the UN. This follows an attack by armed men on a UNICEF house in Goma on 12 May.

* Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos warned last week of the danger posed by armed refugees fleeing Zaire who contine to concentrate along the Angolan border. Speaking on Angolan television, he said the refugees were threatening stability at a decisive moment in Angola's internal peace process.

* Burundi radio said today 63 people were killed and 12 injured in an attack yesterday evening at two regroupments camps in Buganda and Mugwi communes in the northwestern province of Cibitoke. The government said the attackers were members of the former Rwandan Hutu army and Interahamwe militia. However, a spokesman for the majority FRODEBU party blamed the attack on 2,000 Burundian Hutu rebels who had infiltrated Cibitoke from neighbouring Zaire.

Independent Studio Ijambo told IRIN that police in Bujumbura today broke up a demonstration of around 400 university students protesting against the government's opening of negotiations with the rebel National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD). Soldiers circled the university campus to prevent more students from joining the protest. At least a dozen students were arrested. A student leader said they wanted President Pierre Buyoya to resign. They would support negotiations with parties with "clean hands" but not with "genocidaires." The President of the National Assembly, Leonce Ngendakumana, announced his support for the negotiations, as did the ambassadors of the United States and France. In a radio address on Saturday, Buyoya said the talks in Rome had been undertaken to achieve a ceasefire and put an end to the violence. His government had not yet made any commitment other than agreeing on an agenda for the next round of talks. Sources say tension in the capital has increased, with extremist Tutsi groups and certain elements within the Tutsi-dominated army opposing any talks with the Hutu rebels. A close associate of former president Jean-Baptist Bagaza died in prison in Muyinga last week, Studio Ijambo confirmed today. Former army colonel Pascal Ntako was arrested in March with four others accused of plotting to assassinate President Buyoya.

* Kenya has the second biggest gap between rich and poor in the world, according to World Bank figures quoted in the Kenyan 'East African' today. Ten per cent of Kenyans have 47.7% of the country's national income, the paper says, second only to Brazil where the top 10% have 51.3% of the wealth.

* The Ugandan 'New Vision' reports today that Zairean Banyamulenge soldiers killed two members of the rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the Muramba hills overlooking Uganda's Kasese district. The paper earlier reported that 35 members of the rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) appeared in court on treason charges last Friday. They are accused of invading the Kasese district of western Uganda from Zaire last November. ADF rebels are said to be still operating inside Uganda, mainly in the Ruwenzori mountains on the Uganda-Zaire border.

* More than 200 people have been displaced from the Palabek area of Kitgum in northern Uganda following fresh rebel raids, the 'New Vision' said today. The Lords Resistance Army has been active in the area. The report says 48 people were killed in the attacks, 147 fled to Gulu town on 14 May and others are heading towards Kitgum or taking refuge with army units.

* The Sudanese news agency SUNA reported on Saturday that 80 political prisoners had been released from Sudanese jails, following an order by President Omar al-Bashir to release all political detainees.

* SUNA reported yesterday that Kenyan president Daniel arap Moi is to host a regional summit of members of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) on May 27 to discuss the war in southern Sudan.

* Rwandan radio said today armed attackers shot dead two adminstrative officials and their driver in Gisenyi in the northwest on Saturday afternoon. * Basic food prices have increased by more than 50% over the past month, Rwandan radio reported last week. The radio said the increase was the result of the recent poor harvest and insecurity in food-producing regions.

* Rwandan Prime Minister Pierre Celestin Rwigema has called for the World Bank and the Rwandan government to find a solution to the country's debt, Rwandan radio said today. Rwigema said the US$1.1 billion external debt, most of it owed to the World Bank, was "very worrying."

Nairobi, 19 May 1997, 15:05 gmt

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[Via the UN DHA Integrated Regional Information Network. The material contained in this communication may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. UN DHA IRIN Tel: +254 2 622123 Fax: +254 2 622129 e-mail: irin@dha.unon.org for more information. If you re-print, copy, archive or re-post this item, please retain this credit and disclaimer. Quotations or extracts from this report should include attribution to the original sources mentioned, not simply "DHA".]

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Great Lakes: IRIN Weekly Round, 5/19/97

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[The weekly roundup is based on IRIN daily updates and other relevant information from UN agencies, NGOs, governments, donors and the media. IRIN issues these reports for the benefit of the humanitarian community, but accepts no responsibility as to the accuracy of the original sources.]

IRIN Weekly Roundup 4-97 of Main Events in the Great Lakes region covering the period 12-18 May 1997.

ZAIRE: Kinshasa Falls

After weeks of unsuccessful negotiations between Kabila and Mobutu, Zaire finally fell to the ADFL with relatively little resistance. ADFL soldiers arrived in Kinshasa on Saturday greeted by cheering crowds. Last ditch efforts early in the week for a peaceful transfer of power from Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko to an all-party transitional authority, were scuttled when rebel leader Laurent-Desire Kabila, citing security concerns, refused to attend the talks scheduled to take place on a South African ship docked at the Congolese port of Point Noire. However, concerns of a bloody fight for the control of Kinshasa dissipated when Mobutu announced he was stepping down on 16 May. Military Prime Minister Likulia Bolongo speaking on state radio on Saturday, appealed for calm amongst the members of the FAZ, ordering all army units back to their barracks and civilians to stay at home. Bolongo then fled to neighbouring Congo following the precedent set by several high ranking FAZ officers. As of Sunday, some 1,000 members of the DSP handed over their weapons to ADFL troops. Localized fighting continued in some areas of the capital with reported looting by both soldiers and civilians.

Kabila declared himself head-of-state on Saturday, promising a government of national salvation within 72 hours and the formation of a constituent assembly within 60 days. He also announced that Zaire would revert to its old name: the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Kisangani was earlier changed to Stanleyville. Following talks with Kabila on Sunday, South Africa was among the first of several international powers to officially recognize Kabila as the Head of the DRC.

ZAIRE: Settling of Scores

Despite the relatively peaceful fall of Kinshasa, local residents reported limited looting and settlings of scores that have resulted in the deaths of several hundred people. Popular military officer and army chief-of-staff General Mahele Lyoko Bokungu was among those killed. He was assassinated by a member of the presidential guard (DSP), allegedly under orders from Mobutu's son Kongolo, reported AFP. He was assassinated at the DSP camp Tshatshi while attempting to restore order among the DSP, following the flight of their commander to Congo.

ZAIRE: The End of an Era

President Mobutu is expected to leave his jungle palace in Gbadolite to fly to Morocco, whose government has indicated that it is not opposed to welcoming him. On Sunday, a plane carrying 110 of Mobutu's family members was refused landing rights in Gabon and turned back to Brazzaville.

Zairean prosecutors based in Goma have requested international co-operation to freeze Mobutu's vast fortune. The estimate includes 20 properties valued at US $37 million and an unknown number of secret accounts in Western banks. Swiss authorities impounded Mobutu's US $5.6 million villa near Lausanne and have frozen all his and his family's assets in Swiss banks.

ZAIRE: The Kabila Question

Kabila's track record, which has included a variety of political and ideological positions, has promted much speculation among diplomats as to whether democracy or a Mobutu-style autocratic rule will win out. In an effort to influence Kabila's choice, international powers are already moving to put pressure on Kabila. According to the 'Los Angeles Times' on 12 May, the US government has pledged US $10 million and promised to convince the EU to contribute a further US $50 million if Kabila promised elections within two years. The French government has said that it will wait for Kabila to make his first move before taking an official stance.

Despite his success at the frontlines, Kabila is facing growing discord at his back door. In the Kivu area, ethnic tension within the ADFL forces are reportedly becoming more apparent. Local Babembe and Bavira tribes in South Kivu continue to express their frustration over Tutsi control of both the ADFL administrative and military structures.

ZAIRE: Access to Refugees Still Blocked

Despite having received official ADFL permission to travel to the refugee sites south of Biaro, humanitarian agencies have been repeatedly refused access by ADFL soldiers for "security reasons". UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner Sergio de Mello was also blocked from visiting sites more than 42 km south of Kisangani. According to UNHCR, some 338,500 Rwandan and 44,000 Burundian refugees may remain in Zaire, most of whom are not accounted for in known refugee sites. The air repatriation of refugees from Kisangani reached 26,000 by the end of last week. Humanitarian sources claimed 63 refugees died during the transit, underlining previous concerns regarding the speed of the repatriation process.

Following the failure of the UN Human Rights mission to gain access to eastern Zaire, the Hutu refugee organization Rally for the Return of Refugees called for a full investigation of reported massacres and the disappearance of more than 300,000 refugees. Reports from AFP, local missionaries and the French Foreign Ministry continued to warn of further ADFL massacres among the 20,000-30,000 Hutu refugees in the Mbandaka area, on the Zaire river near the Congo border.

ZAIRE: UNICEF Personnel Brutally Attacked by ADFL Soldiers

UNICEF international and local staff in Goma were severely beaten in an attack on their compound on 12 May. Soldiers in ADFL uniforms, who gained entry on the pretext of searching the premises for arms, robbed and beat several of the staff members before escaping. The UNICEF compound was situated near the governor's home in a high security area. The UN said it planned to suspend its activities on Monday if security concerns were not addressed by the ADFL rebels.

TANZANIA: Amnesty International Concerned for Refugees' Safety

Amnesty International raised concern for the plight of Zairean refugees, mainly former Zairean officials and FAZ soldiers, whom they claimed were being pressured to return to Zaire without adequate assurance for their safety. The Tanzanian government said that the refugees, most of whom have taken up residence in Kigoma, must go to the refugee camps like other refugees.

CONGO: Refugee Influx Limited

With the exception of top ranking Zairean officials and military officers, the stream of refugees crossing the Zaire river to the Congo has been relatively limited. As of Friday, aid workers reported the presence of some 1,300 Malians in Brazzaville from Kinshasa. Refugee traffic across the river was heaviest on Friday but slowed down over the weekend. Earlier last week traffic between the two countries was slowed when a bomb exploded on the ferry. By the end of the week, the Congo government had closed its river border to passenger traffic from Zaire. Zairean immigration workers also slowed the flow when they staged a strike demanding 14 months of back-pay.

As of Sunday, the Congolese government still had not taken an official position regarding the Rwandan refugees entering via Zaire, but has sent out a military mission to assess the situation. Despite fuel shortages which are hampering aid efforts, six barges carrying aid were sent from Brazzaville to Liranga and Makotipoko, where several thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees, who fled ADFL advances near Mbandaka in Zaire, are stranded in swampland with no drinking water, food or shelter. Earlier this week a helicopter was used to air-drop food into the inaccessible areas. A DC-3 is also being used to transport assistance to Loukolela.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: Hutu Refugees Strain CAR-Rwandan Relations

Rwanda has accused the CAR of welcoming armed Rwandan Hutu refugees, including former ex-FAR chief Major-General Augustine Bizimungu. A Rwandan presidential aide told Reuters that "Rwanda reserves the right to take whatever action it deemed necessary to bring the killers under control." Several groups of Rwandan, Zairean and Sudanese refugees arrived in Mboki, south-east CAR, early last week. The UNHCR has relocated the Rwandan soldiers to a camp at Obo. Zairean army deserters, many of whom have refused to surrender their weapons, have been moved to a camp in Rafai. Some 300 Rwandan refugees also arrived in the capital, Bangui, on 15 May and some 3,000 more are believed to be en route.

ANGOLA: UNHCR Allowed Access to Refugees

On 12 May, the Angolan government announced it was increasing security along its border with Zaire to contend with the influx of Hutu refugees. A UNHCR team was finally allowed to carry out a mission on 13 May to assess the needs of the refugees. UNHCR has also requested that the Angolan government allow it to establish a humanitarian corridor to rescue the estimated 12,000 refugees stranded in an isolated area of Zaire, near the Angolan border.

RWANDA: Preparations for Executions Underway

Of the 40 suspects sentenced to death, five have had their appeals rejected to date. In preparing the ground work for carrying out the first death sentences, the Rwandan government approved a decree specifying that the executions would not be done in public. The UN Security Council has raised concerns about the poor judicial system and the deteriorating conditions faced by the estimated 100,000 prisoners in Rwanda's prisons and detention centres.

BURUNDI: Trial of 1993 Coup Plotters

After a long wait, the trial of 53 officers accused of planning the 1993 attempted coup in which the then president Melchior Ndadaye was assassinated began last week. The death of the first Hutu president sparked waves of inter-ethnic killings.

BURUNDI: Government and Rebel Negotiations Heighten Tension

Early last week, President Buyoya announced that he had been participating in secret talks in Rome with leaders of the Hutu rebel group the National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD). He said they had agreed in principle to a cease-fire and that he was ready to undertake political dialogue with "all armed factions". Later in the week he also held talks with Tanzanian president Benjamin Mkapa and former president Julius Nyerere regarding the increase in rebel infiltrations into Burundi from Tanzania. Despite international support for the talks, hundreds of Tutsi university students held a demonstration on Friday, protesting President Buyoya's recent negotiations with Hutu rebel groups.

SUDAN: OLS Flights Resume

After a week of negotiating and political pressure, the Sudanese government has agreed to allow Operation Lifeline Sudan to resume aid flights into southern Sudan. Aid workers believe that the ten-day suspension of activities was related to recent advances by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), who now control the towns of Warap, Yei, Rumbek and Tonj. John Garang, leader of the SPLA, said he did not support the April peace treaty signed by the Sudanese government and six rebel splinter groups and would continue his advance.

SUDAN: Uganda-Sudan Agreement

In accordance with the two-week old agreement between the Ugandan and Sudanese governments, captives on both sides are soon to be released. However, Uganda said the agreement is subject to the release of 35 school girls abducted by the Ugandan rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No.178 on the Great Lakes (21 May 1997)

* Laurent-Desire Kabila, self-proclaimed President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), arrived unannounced in Kinshasa at around 9 pm local time yesterday. There was no official reception at the airport, apparently for security reasons. CNN showed pictures today of more ADFL troops entering the capital.

* Two French businessmen were killed by men wearing uniforms at a building site on the outskirts of Kinshasa yesterday evening. Radio France Internationale said it may have been a settling of scores. ADFL security chief Paul Kabongo said the killings may have been carried out by former government soldiers to "discredit the alliance." He promised an inquiry, saying that pockets of insecurity remained in the capital. Local newspapers said hospitals in Kinshasa were continuing to receive dead and wounded from incidents of looting and violence.

* The French foreign ministry today expressed its shock at the killing of the two Frenchmen and called for steps to be taken to ensure the safety of the French community in DRC. The ministry said France's ambassador in Kinshasa would be conveying this in a message to the DRC authorities also calling for quick elections, and expressing concern over the situation of refugees in the country and insecurity in border areas.

* AFP quoted a French government official yesterday saying ousted president Mobutu had not requested shelter in France, but if he did "his request would be examined." A foreign ministry spokesman said they had not yet been approached by the new DRC authorities but would be "accommodating" to such contacts.

* AFP reported yesterday that the Central African Republic (CAR) had formally recognised the DRC and its new authorities. Mozambique made a similar announcement today.

* In the Zimbabwean capital Harare, embassy staff pulled down the Zairean flag and papered over the embassy sign with a handwritten notice reading "Welcome to DRC", AFP reported. The embassy has no electricity or telephones because of long unpaid bills.

* UN and aid agency staff suspended work today in Stanleyville (formerly Kisangani) in eastern DRC as students held violent protests over the killing yesterday of a student by ADFL soldiers who allegedly tried to rob him. The students rampaged through the town, smashing windows at the town hall and hijacking vehicles. Some shots were heard on the university campus. Sources in the town say students were shouting slogans such as "Tutsis go home" and "Leave the Congolese people in peace". UN staff cancelled visits to refugee sites and no planes were brought in. Some 3,000 Rwandan refugees are waiting at the UNHCR transit centre to be flown home. UN officials received additional assurances from the ADFL authorities that they will be able to access freely areas south of km 42 tomorrow.

* The medical aid organisation Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) has accused the ADFL authorities of carrying out "a deliberate strategy... aimed at the elimination of all Rwandan refugees including women and children." In a 10-page report dated 16 May, entitled "A Brutal Strategy of Elimination in Eastern Zaire," MSF says the ADFL has systematically obstructed efforts by aid agencies to provide food, medical care and protection to the refugees. It says aid agencies have been "used repeatedly" by the military to locate or lure refugees out of the forest "in order to eliminate them." MSF estimates that 190,000 Rwandan Hutus are still missing in eastern Zaire.

* Reuters said yesterday tens of thousands of landmines had been planted in DRC, mainly by mercenaries propping up Mobutu's former regime in areas like Stanleyville. The report quoted Human Rights Watch as saying the minefields were unmarked.

* The UNHCR hopes to start as early as tomorrow airlifting Rwandan Hutu refugees found at Mbandaka, in the north-western part of DRC bordering Congo, back to Rwanda. An inter-agency mission to the area found 1-2,000 Rwandans at the airport. Many were men who had been disarmed by Mobutu's army before the arrival of ADFL forces. 5-10,000 others are believed to be dispersed in surrounding forests. They are part of a much larger original group of Rwandans who moved to the area a few weeks ago and camped close to the river on the border. The mission found their camp now empty, with a large pile of discarded former Rwandan army uniforms and weapons and ammunition at a crossroads nearby. Some of the group are said to have gone to Congo while others went further south inside DRC.

* Thousands of refugees from DRC, including businessmen, former Zairean military officers and Rwandans, have been arriving in the Central African Republic (CAR), UNHCR said yesterday. At least 2,000 Zaireans crossed the Ubangi river from the village of Mobutu's residence at Gbadolite to Mobaye in CAR. Humanitarian sources in the CAR capital Bangui say many were from Mobutu's circle and carried their belongings with them. Another 2,000 crossed to Satema. Up to 15,000 refugees are believed to be grouped in three border provinces. Zongo in DRC, close to its border with CAR, was reported to have been looted over the weekend. Two people were killed and several wounded. A number of Zairean refugees are heading for the border.

* Humanitarian sources said today 166 Rwandan refugees who had arrived in the Congolese capital Brazzaville from Kinshasa this week have been transferred to Bilolo camp 35 kms north of Brazzaville. Around 30 wounded members of the former Rwandan army arrived from Kinshasa and are also to be talken to Bilolo. Thousands more Rwandans in the Liranga (MSF-Belgium estimates 7,000 at Liranga) and Lukolela areas to the north have not yet been reached by barge from Brazzaville. Most of the Zaireans who crossed to Ngabe in Congo have returned to DRC.

* UNHCR says it will send teams over the next few days to try to reach up to 12,000 refugees close to DRC's border with Angola. The Angolan government has still not granted permission for cross-border access to these people. A smaller group of around 1,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees are in Angola itself in areas held by the rebel UNITA. Between 3-5,000 Rwandans were turned back by the Angolan authorities from the Dundu area. The government says an influx of Rwandan and Zairean refugees could jeopardise the ongoing repatriation of more than 250,000 Angolans still

outside their country.

* Angolan television reported yesterday that two Brazilian UN peacekeepers were killed on Monday in an ambush near Vila Nova, central Angola. The UN's verification mission, UNAVEM, confirmed the incident which happened near a holding camp for former troops of Jonas Savimbi's rebel UNITA.

* A landmine exploded in a cemetery in the Burundian capital Bujumbura yesterday seriously injuring one man, independent Studio Ijambo told IRIN. In a further indication of rising tension, 23 trade unions condemned President Pierre Buyoya's negotiations with the rebel National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD). The unions issued a joint call for resistance to the talks. The university campus continues to be cordoned off by soldiers to contain student protests over the talks. However, student leaders told Studio Ijambo that their protest was backed by influential officers within the army.

* Switzerland has extradited Alfred Musema, a Rwandan suspected of involvement in the 1994 genocide, to Tanzania for trial before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha. Musema, a former director of a Rwandan tea factory who was arrested in Switzerland in February 1995, is accused of playing a leading part in massacres of 50,000 Tutsis at Bisesero in Kubuye.

* John Garang's rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) said they captured the town of Gogrial in Bahr el Ghazal early on Tuesday. Gogrial was the headquarters of Commander Kerubino, a southern rebel faction leader who had defected to the government side. The SPLA say they are advancing on the main town of Wau, 80 kms south of Gogrial, and to the oilfields around Bentiu to the northeast. Earlier this month the SPLA captured Rumbek and Tonj in Bahr el Ghazal and now control most of this central province.

* Uganda's 'New Vision' said today seven people including three soldiers were killed in an ambush by rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) fighters at Lanyatido, 40 kms south of Kitgum, last Sunday. In a separate report, the newspaper said 26 LRA rebels were killed and a top rebel commander injured in fierce battles last week with Ugandan army units in Kitgum. Security sources said LRA forces had moved from Gulu to the neighbouring Kitgum district in search of food.

Nairobi, 21 May 1997, 14:50 gmt

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[Via the UN DHA Integrated Regional Information Network. The material contained in this communication may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. UN DHA IRIN Tel: +254 2 622123 Fax: +254 2 622129 e-mail: irin@dha.unon.org for more information. If you re-print, copy, archive or re-post this item, please retain this credit and disclaimer. Quotations or extracts from this report should include attribution to the original sources mentioned, not simply "DHA".]

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IRIN Emergency Update No.179 on the Great Lakes (22 May 1997)

* Laurent-Desire Kabila, self-proclaimed president of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), is still working on putting together his transitional government, five days after his forces captured the capital Kinshasa. He has yet to make an official public appearance in Kinshasa. Reuters reported today that the secretary-general of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL), Deogratias Bugera, met yesterday for just under an hour at the Intercontinental Hotel with the popular leader of the opposition Democratic Union for Social Progress (UDPS), Etienne Tshisekedi. There was no word on whether Tshisekedi would be included in the new government. Radio France Internationale (RFI) said today more than 100 applicants for the post of prime minister were received by ADFL officials.

* Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said yesterday Kabila should form a broad-based government but should resist pressure from Western governments to hold quick elections.

* South Africa said it would send experts to help rebuild the DRC's economy, especially its finance system.

* Two top military officers in Mobutu's army surrendered to ADFL forces yesterday. General Amela Lokima, deputy chief of staff and governor of Kinshasa, and General Michel Elessi, commander of the forces in Kinshasa, turned themselves in wearing civilian clothes at the Intercontinental Hotel in the capital. They were jeered by a crowd of youths.

* AFP reported that up to 85 members of Mobutu's family left the Togolese capital Lome yesterday for Ndjamena in Chad. Sources said Mobutu himself may follow when his health permits.

* Botswana announced formal recognition of the new DRC government. Germany said its co-operation with Kabila would be dependent on progress in the country's democratisation.

* The ongoing airlift of refugees from Stanleyville (formerly Kisangani) to Rwanda has so far repatriated 2,993 unaccompanied minors who, along with the sick and elderly, received priority in the operation. Many are orphans, others have been separated or abandoned by their parents because of harsh conditions. Aid agencies report that through expert tracing, 70% of the children find their real families or foster homes in Rwanda within a month.

* Rwandan radio said yesterday the court of appeal in Nyabasindu, Gikongoro, sentenced one man to death and another to life imprisonment for crimes of genocide committed in 1994. The radio also said 17 people had been discovered by the authorities in Gikongoro disguising themselves as Burundian refugees to avoid being identified by neighbours and accused of genocide crimes.

* Burundi's Foreign Minister, Luc Rukingama, said today an all-party conference on the Burundi conflict would take place in Geneva next month hosted by UNESCO, AFP reported. Speaking in Brussels, Rukingama said it would be the second phase of peace talks with the rebel National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD) begun in Rome in April. No date has been fixed for the conference but Rukingama suggested 14 June.

* Burundi radio said today 20 people were killed in an attack by Hutu rebels yesterday at Gitanga in southern Burundi. The radio gave no further details. AFP said gunfire was heard last night in the suburbs of Bujumbura and there were reports of rebels infiltrating the capital.

* Amnesty International has called for an independent investigation into the death of retired Colonel Pascal Ntako, who died on 11 May in Muyinga prison in Burundi. Amnesty said Ntako, who was arrested over alleged involvement in a plot to assassinate President Pierre Buyoya, had been denied medical care for diabetes. Amnesty also called for guarantees of the safety of eight other men detained on similar charges.

* Burundi radio said yesterday Tanzania had informed Burundian businessmen with goods at the port of Kigoma that they could resume trade in accordance with the resolutions of the latest sanctions summit in Arusha.

Nairobi, 22 May 1997, 14:45 gmt

[ENDS]

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Great Lakes: IRIN Update 182, 5/27/97

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IRIN Emergency Update No.182 on the Great Lakes (27 May 1997)

* State television in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) said yesterday the government had banned all demonstrations and political party activity until further notice because of security. Supporters of Etienne Tshisekedi, leader of the opposition Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), have threatened to stage protests in Kinshasa on Wednesday and Friday and stay-at-home strikes next week over his exclusion from the new government. International flights to Kinshasa were due to start again today, but the river crossing to neighbouring Congo remains closed. Congolese radio yesterday announced the banning of commercials on private stations to end "disorder and anarchy" in this sector of broadcasting.

* President Laurent-Desire Kabila is to be formally inaugurated as head of state of the DRC on Thursday, state radio said today.

* The French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette said France and the USA were working together to support the DRC's transition to democracy, AFP reported yesterday. His statement followed a meeting in Paris with US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright.

* South African President Yoweri Museveni defended DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila's "commitment to democracy" today, AFP reported. The occasion was the start of a four-day state visit to South Africa by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. Talks are to centre on regional economic co-operation. Mandela praised Kabila's "disciplined army" and said it would be "suicidal" for him to allow political parties to operate before he has a firm grip on the government. * The UN has officially accepted the request by the new Kinshasa government to change the name of Zaire to the Democratic Republic of Congo. The flag has also been changed to the one adopted on independence day, 30 June 1960: dark blue background with six yellow stars down the left side and a large yellow star in the centre. The request came from charge d'affaires Lukabi Khabouji N-Zaji.

* Reuters reported today that Belgium has pulled out nearly half of its 700-strong force stationed in Brazzaville, Congo, before the takeover in Kinshasa. The US and Britian expect to complete withdrawals of their troops, on standby for a possible evacuation of expatriates, this week.

* UNHCR repatriated 880 Rwandan refugees yesterday from Mbandaka in northwestern DRC. In Stanleyville (Kisangani) in the east, 514 refugees were flown back to Rwanda today. The authorities said a landmine was discovered on the road south of Km 48, preventing aid workers from proceeding yesterday.

* Angolan radio said yesterday soldiers of the former Zairean army were infiltrating Angola along the vast 2,600 kms border between Angola and DRC, and were joining rebel UNITA forces in Uige province.

* A barge recently arrived at Liranga, northern Congo, from the capital Brazzaville, bringing supplies to several thousand Rwandan Hutu refugees who fled from neighbouring DRC. Humanitarian sources say most have not expressed interest in repatriation to Rwanda.

* The Inter Press Service (IPS) today reported that 12 people died in recent clashes between supporters of rival political parties in northern Congo. The report also says 4,000 people were displaced in the violence on May 11 in Owando. Congo is due to hold presidential elections in July. * Independent Studio Ijambo in Burundi said 42 people were killed in an attack on a church at Muhuta, 31 kms south of the capital Bujumbura, on May 14. The incident was publicised through an obituary announcement on national radio by church officials. Diplomatic sources said the army was involved in the attack, which may have had many more victims. An army spokesman said he had no information about it.

* The Burundian majority FRODEBU party threatened to resort to violence if the government does not restore peace and constitutional rule, AFP reported from Dar es Salaam yesterday. The report cites a letter from FRODEBU leader Jean Minani to all heads of state attending next week's OAU summit in Harare, Zimbabwe, saying they will use "all means, including military struggle."

* At least four people died and around 45 were injured when a lorry repatriating refugees from DRC collided with two other vehicles near the Rwandan capital Kigali on Sunday, AFP reported yesterday.

* The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has adjourned until September 29 the trial of Jean-Paul Akayesu, former mayor of Taba. Akayesu is charged with involvement in the massacre of 2,000 Tutsis during the genocide in 1994. His lawyer announced he had been unable to find any defence witnesses willing to testify.

* The Sudanese government has acknowledged the fall of Rumbek in the south to the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), AFP reported today. A government newspaper blamed the loss of the town in April on "complicity" of top government officials.

* Ugandan radio said yesterday a four-day peace meeting in Moroto, Uganda, between Kenyan and Ugandan pastoralists ended with a call to stop cattle rustling.

Nairobi, 27 May 1997, 15:00 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No.184 on the Great Lakes (29 May 1997)

* The rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda has stepped up its attacks in Kitgum and Gulu districts in the north, according to various reports. AFP said today four government soldiers were killed in an LRA ambush on the Gulu-Kitgum road on Tuesday. The same day a Catholic mission 32 kms south of Kitgum was raided and a vehicle burned. The army said it killed eight of the LRA raiders involved. Last week, humanitarian sources report a series of incidents. Kitgum suburbs were attacked in the early hours of 21 and 23 May. Gulu suburbs were attacked in the evening of 21 May and several battles took place in the countryside. Landmines have been planted widely, injuring mainly civilians. Hospitals in Kitgum are said to be full. Among the wounded is a 12-year-old boy who had both legs amputated above the knee after stepping on a landmine at Acholi Bur. There are several active groups of rebels, one is moving northwest from Acholi Bur while another has moved northeast from Kitgum Matidi towards Mucwini. Access to outlying areas and to camps for 52,000 displaced people in Kitgum is now very difficult. Aid workers report an increase in child malnutrition rates. WFP says the current insecurity destroys the last hopes for a good harvest in the area in July.

* The Ugandan 'New Vision' said today rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), forced out of their camps by the army, are fleeing into neighbouring DRC.

* The Burundian army today called on residents of the capital Bujumbura to remain calm after battles yesterday in the surrounding hills. Mortar fire was heard at various times in the day. Army spokesman Colonel Isaie Nibizi said on Burundi radio there was no danger. Local journalists saw the bodies of 40 rebels killed in fighting with the army 10 kms south of Bujumbura yesterday. The army said many more had been killed. Burundi's President Pierre Buyoya held talks with Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu in the Rwandan capital Kigali yesterday. Buyoya said afterwards he had discussed his efforts to negotiate with Hutu rebels. He blamed the recent upsurge in violence in Burundi on former Rwandan soldiers and Hutu militiamen infiltrating from neighbouring DRC.

* Tanzanian Prime Minister Frederick Sumaye today denied that Tanzania was supporting Burundian rebels inside Tanzania. In an interview with the BBC Swahili Service quoted on Tanzanian radio, Sumaye said there was no cross-border movement of rebels or weapons in or out of Tanzania.

* Reports of violent disturbances involving soldiers of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) and civilians in Uvira in South Kivu are being investigated. A number of Uvira residents are reported to have fled to neighbouring Burundi, well placed sources told IRIN. * Laurent-Desire Kabila was sworn in today as President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Thousands of people filled the stadium in the capital Kinshasa for the ceremony, which was Kabila's first public appearance since ADFL troops captured the city 12 days ago. Kabila said presidential and parliamentary elections would be held in April 1999. Earlier, a decree was issued giving Kabila wide personal powers, including the right to appoint civilian and military officials. A demonstration by students in the stadium was dispersed by soldiers before the inauguration ceremony started.

* South African President Nelson Mandela told a group of visiting American congressmen yesterday there were no guarantees of former Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko's safety if he returned to the country now called DRC. He said there were a number of pressures on him to return.

* Belgium says it will give visitor visas to officials of Mobutu's ousted regime only if they had earlier voiced support for democratic change, Reuters reported yesterday.

* The Angolan army is advancing towards a key airfield held by the former rebel UNITA, Reuters reported yesterday, quoting military analysts and officials. The reports said troops were massing at government-held Cafunfo in the northeast, close to Lusamba and its airfield. Observers are worried that the army's advance is endangering Angola's peace process.

* The Congolese government yesterday warned refugees from the DRC to refrain from actions "likely to harm our relations with our neighbours." Several thousand Rwandan Hutus are among those who fled DRC in recent weeks.

* [IRIN regrets the error that slipped in to Update 182, paragraph 4. Of course, the South African President is Nelson Mandela. It was our mistake and not AFP's.]

Nairobi, 29 May 1997, 15:10 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No.185 on the Great Lakes (30 May 1997)

* Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has called for the formation of an African Common Market now that the "big hole in the middle of Africa has been filled up". Speaking in Kinshasa yesterday after the inauguration of Laurent-Desire Kabila as president of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), he said Kabila's forces had "liberated not only Congo but all Africa". "We want a common market from east to west and from South Africa to the west," he added. He dismissed the notion of Anglophone or Francophone countries, saying a preferred term would be Bantuphone. Angolan President Eduardo dos Santos, who was also present at the inauguration, stressed the desire to transform central Africa into a region of peace and security, while President Pierre Buyoya of Burundi hoped for good relations with DRC, particularly in security and trade.

* A French official visiting Kinshasa said French expatriates in the city were not especially targeted, but France nevertheless decided to maintain its 300 troops across the river Congo in Brazzaville. Other foreign troops, who were stationed in the Republic of Congo for a possible evcuacation of expatriates, have started withdrawing from the country, but the French defence ministry said yesterday its forces would remain to reassure French nationals in Kinshasa. French troops are also now providing logistical support to the Congolese (Brazzaville) army and NGOs dealing with an influx of Rwandan refugees from DRC.

* Thousands of Rwandan Hutus yesterday arrived in the Congolese capital Brazzaville by barge from their swampy refuge further north. The barge convoy took a week to bring some 4,000 refugees down from the Liranga region but many more were still stranded in the marshlands. Reuters said 90 percent of the arrivals were young men. The refugees will be transported to a site at Bilolo, just north of the capital.

* The UN Security Council last night expressed support for DRC saying it opposed any interference in the country's internal affairs. It urged a peaceful transition leading to free and democratic elections and called for the withdrawal of all external forces from the country, including mercenaries. It also called for an end to violence against refugees in the county.

* Sources in South Kivu province allege 10 people were found shot dead in Uvira after killings and abductions on Sunday night. The discovery on Monday morning triggered an angry demonstration by residents of Uvira which was allegedly violently suppressed by the ADFL army, causing some 30 deaths. A further 100 people were reportedly wounded, including the commissaire de zone. Tensions have always been high in the area between the Bavira, Babembe and Bafulero people and the Banyamulenge who now dominate the local authorities.

A high ranking official of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL), who arrived in South Kivu yesterday, warned of a "precarious" security situation in the southeast of the province. According to ADFL radio in Bukavu, Commander Anselme Masasu Nindaga, said some businessmen and politicians of the former Kivu were supporting "infiltrators and enemies of the liberation". He named former prime minister Faustin Birindwa, former Central Bank governor Cyprien Pay Pay Sykassighe and former National Assembly president Celestin Anzuluni Bembe Isinyonyi as among those involved in destabilising the province.

* DRC Finance Minister Mawampanga Mwanananga has announced a new currency to replace the new zaire. Speaking on Wednesday, he said no new bank notes would be printed until the introduction of the Congolese franc. However, he did not say when the new currency would come into effect but warned that there would be tough decisions and sacrifices ahead. He added that once the country knew what it owed, the government would discuss the way forward with creditors.

* As the trial of another Rwandan genocide suspect was adjourned in Arusha yesterday, an international conference of western nations agreed to push for the extradition of suspects wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). The court adjourned the trial of Georges Rutaganda, a high ranking member of the Interahamwe militia, until June 9. In Geneva, the two-day conference on increasing the effectiveness of the ICTR also stressed the need for beefing up witness protection. US Assistant Secretary of State John Shattuck told reporters after the meeting that the pace of trials and indictments should rise "but we have to put this in the context of starting from zero".

* A security meeting yesterday in the southern Rwandan town of Butare between officials from Rwanda and Burundi noted the need for enhanced border controls. Civilian and military officials from Gikongoro and Butare prefectures in Rwanda and Ngozi and Kayanza provinces in Burundi agreed that people crossing the border must carry indentification and use official checkpoints only. They also called for greater information exchanges on security issues.

* There has been a spate of death threats against NGOs in Burundi, according to humanitarian sources. Catholic Relief Services was forced to evacuate two staff members after they received written threats and Population Services International had to evacuate an employee who was also threatened.

* Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa is in Kenya on his first visit to the country since taking office in November 1995. Mkapa, who arrived yesterday, will spend four days in Kenya during which he is to meet government leaders and visit various development projects. At a state dinner last night, Mkapa called on the West not to interfere in DRC's democratisation process.

Nairobi, 30 May 1997, 13:00 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No.195 on the Great Lakes (17 June 1997)

* Peace talks in Libreville, Gabon aimed at ending the conflict in Congo ended in failure yesterday. Gabonese President Omar Bongo had arranged talks between representatives of President Pascal Lissouba and his opponent, ex-Congolese president Denis Sassou Nguesso. Also present was joint UN-OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes, Mohamed Sahnoun, who later vowed to redouble mediation efforts. In Brazzaville itself, fighting continued between government troops and Sassou Nguesso's "Cobra" militia for control of the airport, as France continued pulling its troops out of the city. CNN said today the USA is closing its embassy in the city and withdrawing its staff.

* The authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have rejected accusations by the national human rights organisation, the Association for the Defence of Human Rights (AZADHO), that over 640 people were killed in the fight for Kinshasa last month. According to Gabonese radio, government spokesman Raphael Ghenda described the allegations as malicious and intended to harm the new regime. In its report, AZADDHO also condemned the "downward drift into a totalitarian state and a democracy that destroys freedom". It accused the authorities of indifference to summary justice meted out by some soldiers of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL) and recommended that international aid be conditional on respect for human rights and democracy.

* Another potential conflict is brewing in Sudan where parliamentarians from western areas have called for self-determination, following an agreement signed between southern rebel factions and the government earlier this year. The news agency, Inter-Press Service, said a memorandum sent by 47 legislators to President Omar el-Bashir this month congratulated the southerners "for gaining their rights". However, the accord did not address the situation in other parts of Sudan, the memo added. The westerners' demand is likely to be rejected by the Khartoum authorities, and Riak Machar, leader of the southern rebel United Democratic Salvation Front alliance, has already said any concessions to the west would violate the accord. According to Machar, the west has not been oppressed by the authorities. The parliamentarians claim that oil and agriculturally-rich areas, which should belong to the west, are to be handed over to the south under the terms of the pact.

* The Sudanese authorities have called on Khartoum residents originating from Bahr el-Ghazal province to mobilise to defend their home areas against attack by John Garang's SPLA. The SPLA has reportedly been making significant advances in the province. Sudanese Vice-President George Kongor Arop, who comes from the region, has ordered the formation of a mobilisation committee to arrange to send people to training camps, AFP reported. Meanwhile, Sudan has called for a summit meeting with Egypt whom it accuses of supporting Sudanese rebel movements.

* Amnesty International has accused Lord's Resistance Army rebels in northern Uganda of "gross abuses" against children and adults, and called on Sudan to stop supporting the insurgents. After a two-week mission to the area, Amnesty's team leader told AFP he was "shocked" by the findings. He also expressed concern over the activities of the Ugandan army, saying ill-discipline among some soldiers went unchecked. There was also a pattern of alleged rebel collaborators being mistreated and sometimes killed, he said. But he added that the army's human rights record was an improvement on 1992.

The state-owned 'New Vision" today reported that five senior officers with responsibility for northern Uganda were suspended following alleged irregularities in their operational areas. They included the 2nd Division Commanding Officer, Col. Peter Kerim and his deputy Lt. Col. Napoleon Rutambika. No further details were available, the newspaper said.

Another article in 'New Vision" said a large number of rebels had overrun the western town of Bundibugyo yesterday, after the army had been deployed elsewhere following reports of an imminent invasion in the Basunga, Kakuku and Butogonyamya areas along the border with DRC. According to a 'New Vision' reporter, mortar and gunfire could still be heard at Ntanda, 14 kms from Bundibugyo. A government official told AFP rebels from the Allied Democratic Forces mixed with Rwandan guerrillas and former Zairean soldiers were responsible for the attack, but they had been repulsed by the Ugandan army. Minister of State for Defence in charge of Training, Col Jeje Odong, said five rebels were killed and two Ugandan soldiers wounded.

* Two people were killed and three others wounded when an armed gang launched an attack in Gihanga, western Burundi on Sunday night. According to Burundi radio, a similar attack occurred the same night in Mitakataka zone, Bubanza commune. A child was hit by bullets and is undergoing hospital treatment.

* The UN's annual human development index has placed Rwanda and Burundi as the second and seventh least developed countries respectively. Also in the bottom third of the table are other countries of the region, notably DRC, Tanzania, Sudan and Uganda. The Human Development Report 1997 notes that a quarter of the world's population is still living in poverty reflecting "inexcusable failures" of national and international policy. The greatest proportion of people below the poverty line live in sub-Saharan Africa, where continuing conflict in many countries and the rise in diseases such as AIDS/HIV threaten to exacerbate the problem. The report proposed action including conflict prevention, debt relief for developing countries and further aid.

Nairobi, 17 June 1997, 15:00 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No.196 on the Great Lakes (18 June 1997)

* Humanitarian assessment missions visiting eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have reported a breakdown of structures in the region, after years of neglect and conflict, particularly in areas affected by refugees. They also said there was an urgent need for seeds and medicine. They expressed particular concern over mined areas in the Ubundu region, between Kilometre 23 and 44 south of Kisangani, which was causing fear among the local population and called for urgent demining activities to take place. According to local people, the mines had been placed by Serb mercenaries fighting alongside the former Zairean army to stop the advance of the-then rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL).

Reports were still filtering through of atrocities allegedly committed by ADFL soldiers against refugees as they gained control of areas in DRC. Humanitarian sources cited reports of a mass grave in Boende containing the bodies of women and children.

The reports coincide with criticism by six human rights groups over what they allege is a deal between the UN and DRC leader Laurent-Desire Kabila to allow human rights investigations to go ahead. In a letter to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the six groups argued that the UN's DRC human rights rapporteur, Roberto Garreton, would not be included in the investigation team because he has been deeply critical of the ADFL's record. The letter expressed concern that this could set a precedent for future human rights investigations regarding the UN's principles for conducting surveys.

Asked about the issue at a news briefing, Annan's spokesman Fred Eckhard said the investigation team would include the "appropriate people". An advance team of the Commission of Enquiry is due to leave Geneva for Kinshasa tomorrow for talks with the authorities expected to focus on freedom of access, security issues and the sites to be visited.

* Two local staff workers of WFP in Rwanda have been brutally shot dead by unknown assailants in Ruhengeri, a WFP press release said today. In the first incident, a field worker was killed in his home along with his wife, a child and a relative. In the second incident, a contract clerk was found shot dead in a forest near Ruhengeri. WFP said it was seeking an investigation into the shootings.

* The International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda (ICTR) yesterday adjourned the trial of genocide suspect Jean-Paul Akayesu until October 22 in order to allow the prosecution time to present fresh accusations regarding rape and sexual torture of women. Prosecutor Pierre Richard Prosper told the court that initial investigations had not established the accused's responsibility in this domain. He added that the testimonies of women in Taba commune, of which Akayesu is the former mayor, were shocking, Fondation Hirondelle, an independent media organisation, reported.

* The warring sides in Congo-Brazzaville have agreed a three-day truce from midnight yesterday to give international mediators a chance to negotiate a solution. Brazzaville was reported quiet early today after clashes between President Pascal Lissouba's forces and his opponent ex-president Denis Sassou Nguesso died down, in accordance with the ceasefire. The UN Secretary-General's spokesman, Fred Eckhard, said the truce was negotiated by the National Mediating Committee, headed by the influential mayor of Brazzaville Bernard Kolelas. The conflicting sides has also agreed to the demilitarisation of the airport to enable commercial and humanitarian flights to go ahead. The joint UN-OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes, Mohamed Sahnoun, who attended peace talks in Libreville, Gabon, is now in Brazzaville for discussions aimed at overcoming some of the obstacles encountered in the Libreville meeting.

The fighting has limited access to Rwandan refugees in Congo, but UNHCR was today due to send a team to Impfondo, 750 kms north of Brazzaville to try and locate pockets of refugees. Aid workers reported there had been some tension in Bilolo camp, near Brazzaville, among refugees who did not receive food distributions. The Congolese Red Cross carried out their last food distribution some 10-13 days ago, but were forced to suspend operations because of the fighting. There has been no access to Bilolo since the unrest began nearly two weeks ago.

ICRC, which had evacuated its expatriate staff from Brazzaville, sent two delegates back to the city on June 14 bringing with them food and medical supplies for Brazzaville hospitals. A second flight followed the next day with more supplies. ICRC says there is little indication as to the exact number of people wounded in the conflict, but the delegates who visited Tangalai hospital in northern Brazzaville found conditions there to be extremely serious, with staff working round the clock and supplies completely exhausted. ICRC hopes to increase its presence in Brazzaville over the coming days.

MSF maintained its presence in the northern Congolese areas of Lukolela and Ndjoudoun where they are running dispensaries, therapeutic and supplementary feeding centres. Some 5,000 refugees remain in Lukolela and 3,000 in Ndjoudoun. Supplies have been provided by MSF downriver from Bangui in the Central African Republic.

Congolese President Pascal Lissouba, who earlier said presidential elections would not be affected by the violence, yesterday admitted that the July 27 poll was threatened by the continued fighting. He told French radio that the elections could not take place at the end of July as long as people had arms. Only a buffer force could help in ensuring that people laid down their weapons. Lissouba has urged France to keep its troops in the country to act as a buffer, but French soldiers have started pulling out of Brazzaville.

* Tolerance towards refugees in Tanzania is waning, according to two local relief agencies. The Kenyan 'Daily Nation' said the heads of the Tanzanian Red Cross and the Christian Council of Tanzania noted during a panel talk that most Tanzanians were "bored stiff" and unsympathetic towards the plight of refugees in the country. Unless host nations benefited from the presence of refugees, hostility towards them would persist, they warned.

* In its annual report released today, Amnesty International noted that the refugee problem in Africa, particularly in the Great Lakes region, has worsened over the last 12 months. The report said Africa accounted for one in three of the world's refugees, adding that the refugee problem was "inextricably linked" to human rights abuse. According to Amnesty, some of the crises could have been averted such as in Rwanda where two years before the 1994 genocide, human rights specialists issued warnings of the threat which were ignored by the international community.

* Uganda's state-owned 'New Vision' today reported that hundreds of civilians have been fleeing a rebel invasion in the western Ugandan town of Bundibugyo. A mixture of rebels from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), former Zairean soldiers and Interahamwe militia overran the town on Monday night, spearking the mass exodus. 'New Vision' said the army had deployed a helicopter gunship in Fort Portal on standby to reinforce troops in Bundibugyo. AFP quoted reliable sources as saying a German doctor with the aid agency GTZ was abducted by the rebels, and an Anglican bishop from Rwenzori diocese is missing and feared abducted.

* Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni held talks with visiting former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere in Kampala yesterday on events in the Great Lakes region. Sources said the discussions centred on Burundi and the next steps to be taken by regional leaders who earlier this year partially lifted economic sanctions against the country. Nyerere left for Kigali later in the day.

* Opposition leaders in Kenya have called off nine pro-reform rallies throughout the country scheduled for Saturday. Kenneth Matiba and Raila Odinga said the rallies had been postponed so as not to clash with the inauguration of Catholic Archbishop Ndingi Mwana'a Nzeki. Kenyan press reports noted that the rallies were bound to provoke confrontation. Many ruling party functionaries had warned they would recruit youth wingers to disrupt the meetings. Matiba and Odinga said a new date for the rallies would be announced later. The stage is set for a possible showdown tomorrow with pro-reformists threatening to disrupt parliament during the presentation of the 1997-98 budget amid warnings that the government will firmly clamp down on any interruptions.

Nairobi, 18 June 1997, 15:00 gmt

[ENDS]

[Via the UN DHA Integrated Regional Information Network. The material contained in this communication may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. UN DHA IRIN Tel: +254 2 622123 Fax: +254 2 622129 e-mail: irin@dha.unon.org for more information. If you re-print, copy, archive or re-post this item, please retain this credit and disclaimer. Quotations or extracts from this report should include attribution to the original sources mentioned, not simply "DHA".]

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Great Lakes: IRIN Update 197, 6/19/97

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IRIN Emergency Update No.197 on the Great Lakes (19 June 1997)

* The Ugandan army says it has killed over 200 rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in fighting which has been raging since Monday when the rebels overran Bundibugyo township in the west. The state-owned 'New Vision' reported that the rebels were killed during a battle to dislodge them from the area. According to the newspaper, two senior local policemen were also killed in the fighting. The armed forces also reportedly managed to break up the rebels' command posts in the Sempaya and Ntandi areas. The Anglican bishop of Rwenzori diocese, who was reported missing, turned up in Fort Portal last night after two days of captivity in Bundibugyo, the paper said. Local residents said a German doctor with the aid agency GTZ, who was abducted by rebels, was released yesterday.

Four people, including a four month-old baby were killed and eight others injured when ADF rebels ambushed six vehicles in the Kasese area last night, the 'New Vision' reported. Local police told the newspaper the attackers shot at the vehicles one by one as they reached Mweya Gate in Queen Elizabeth National Park, a few kilometres from the Kikorongo-Bwera-Kasese junction.

The Ugandan army's Fourth Division Commander, Col. James Kazini, has declared new army deployment and mobilization strategies in a bid to end the civil war in northern Uganda. "We found it prudent to re-deploy the army in counties to enable people go back to their rightful jobs. They have been wasting time in town, it's time they went home," Kazini told a security meeting in Gulu on Monday. According to the 'New Vision', he said the new strategies would mark the end of the war. He claimed Lord's Resistance Army rebels in Uganda were no longer receiving supplies from Sudan because their headquarters had been destroyed.

However, according to another newspaper, a senior army official claimed the LRA has established three new bases in southern Sudan after their original base in Aru was destroyed by the Sudan People's Liberation Army. The independent 'Monitor' newspaper yesterday quoted the Ugandan army's military intelligence director Col Fred Tolit as saying the new bases were now located 34 miles south of Juba. He added that the Sudanese government had flown LRA rebels including leader Joseph Kony, Otti Lagony, Omona and Nyeko Yadil to Khartoum to regroup. The LRA, he said, was planning to fight the SPLA in southern Sudan.

* Humanitarian workers who visited regroupment camps in the northern Burundi provinces of Kayanza, Karuzi and Bubanza have expressed concern that people are going without food. It appears there are no aid workers based in the camps themselves, due to lack of funding and objections to regroupment. MSF in Karuzi is collecting malnourished children from some camps and taking them to feeding centres. Particular concern has been expressed over camps in Bubanza where access is limited and the close proximity of returnee, displaced and regroupment centres is causing conflict among residents. Aid workers have also reported severe malnutrition in people emerging from the Kibira forest in Bubanza and Kayanza provinces.

* The authorities in Burundi have reiterated a call for political dialogue, ahead of the July 1 independence anniversary. In comments broadcast by Burundi radio yesterday, Information Minister Pierre-Claver Ndayicariye called on Burundians to be "adaptable" and said the government would introduce a peace-building programme based on political dialogue. He described the peace process as "rejuvenation and moral rearmament". On July 1, Burundi will celebrate 35 years of independence.

* The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) will soon launch economic reforms, including a review of the country's mining and investment rules, Reuters reported. Mines Minister Florent Mututulo told a sub-Saharan oil and minerals conference in Mauritius on Tuesday that the government intended to renegotiate the $US5 billion debt inherited from ex-president Mobutu Sese Seko. Restoring investor faith was one of the government's main priorities, he said. Mututulo appealed for foreign investment, saying the objective was to create a prosperous mining industry which would assist the country's economic recovery.

* The government of DRC leader Laurent-Desire Kabila is to nationalise a popular private television station and impose hefty taxes on other private media. According to Congolese state radio, Tele Kin Malebo will become the second channel of the Television of the People. In addition, non-religious broadcasting institutions will have to contribute 40 percent of revenue to the treasury, and religious stations 20 percent.

* Ousted president Mobutu Sese Seko has moved from his Rabat hotel in Morocco to a specially requisitioned hotel in the northern resort of Tangier. According to the hotel management, Mobutu and his entourage were expected to spend several weeks there. Heavy security was deployed around the hotel yesterday.

* Today's edition of the 'Washington Post', citing western and Congolese sources, has said Kabila is under intense pressure from Rwanda and Uganda to stymie a UN human rights investigation in eastern DRC. At a rally in Bukavu last weekend, Kabila reportedly warned local government officials not to direct investigators to any mass grave sites nor to potential witnesses. An advance team of investigators, led by Georg Mautner-Markhof, is due in Kinshasa tomorrow.

* The authorities in Central African Republic say some 50,000 Zaireans have crossed the border into the country, 9,000 of whom have registered with the authorities. Less than 300 have registered with UNHCR, and 250 of these have already been accommodated in Buka camp, a four hour drive north of the capital Bangui. Most of the Zaireans come from Equateur province and refuse to be registered as refugees. Many of them are well-off and are staying with relatives in border areas. UNHCR has also registered about 800 Rwandans, 600 of whom have been taken to Buka. Collection teams organised by UNHCR travel along the CAR-DRC border, where there are about six transit centres, to seek out refugees and see if they are willing to go to the camps. Humanitarian sources have expressed concern that the fighting in neighbouring Congo (Brazzaville) will further destabilise the unsteady situation in CAR, where army mutinies are frequent. In addition, many of the arrivals in CAR are believed to be ex-FAZ and ex-FAR members. The town of Bangassou on the border with DRC is reportedly insecure due to the presence of armed ex-FAZ elements.

* A three-day ceasefire agreed by opposing forces of Congolese (Brazzaville) President Pascal Lissouba and ex-president Denis Sassou Nguesso appeared to be holding today, as diplomatic initiatives continued to find a solution to the conflict. The truce came into effect at midnight on Tuesday. Yesterday, the OAU-UN Special Representative for the Great Lakes Mohamed Sahnoun held separate meetings with Lissouba and Sassou Nguesso, during which he backed the idea of an African peacekeeping force for Congo.

* There were riotous scenes in the Kenyan parliament today, after opposition MPs tried to prevent Finance Minister Musalia Mudavadi from delivering the 1997-98 budget speech. Eyewitnesses told IRIN a planned rally outside parliament was called off because the sheer number of ruling

party supporters made confrontation inevitable. In addition, there was a heavy security force presence in town and particularly around the parliament building. Inside parliament, opposition MPs created a commotion every time the minster tried to speak, culminating in an attempt to lift the mace. Eventually fighting broke out between both sides of the House, with several MPs knocked to the ground. Some opposition MPs were finally thrown out of the building and IRIN's sources say the situation in town this evening is very tense with large numbers of paramilitary forces and riot police on standby. Some scuffles have broken out. By midday, most businesses had pulled down their shutters.

* The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency appeal for the Great Lakes Emergency stands at $US 213,532,668 as of 9 June 1997, covering 65.8 percent of needs.

Nairobi, 19 June 1997, 15:15 gmt [ENDS]

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Great Lakes: IRIN Update 199, 6/24/97

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IRIN Emergency Update No.199 on the Great Lakes (24 June 1997)

* The state-owned Ugandan 'New Vision' newspaper has alleged troops from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are helping Uganda defeat a rebel incursion in the west. Troops from the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL) had reportedly moved to the foothills of the Ruwenzori mountains which straddle both countries to flush out Ugandan rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) who launched an attack on the town of Bundibugyo last week. Ugandan Defence Minister Amama Mbabazi told the 'New Vision' he was unaware of ADFL involvement, but said it would be "good" if DRC leader Laurent-Desire Kabila's troops moved in.

The 'New Vision' today reported that thousands of people were evacuated from Bundibugyo to Fort Portal yesterday as fighting between rebels and government troops intensified. In addition, thousands more people were streaming into Bundibugyo from the surrounding villages, where rebels were reportedly "wandering" around. The situation in the area remains unclear. Local witnesses claimed the rebels had burnt alive 12 people and slaughtered another 10. The Ugandan army yesterday shelled rebel hideouts in the town and army sources said they would introduce foot patrols along the 46-mile Bundibugyo-Fort Portal road which has been closed to public traffic for the last week. The 'New Vision' also quoted army intelligence sources as saying some 80 Rwandan Interahamwe members were among the rebel ADF force which invaded Bundibugyo.

A UN assessment mission, led by WFP, left Kampala for Bundibugyo by road today and is expected to arrive tonight. A military escort will be picked up in Mbarara and the team, which also comprises UNICEF, UNDP and WHO, plans to stay in the area two days, security permitting. WFP is sending 60 MTs of emergency food supplies.

* DHA has estimated a total number of 187,393 people displaced by the civil war in regions of eastern DRC, based on information from a variety of sources including NGOs and missionaries. A survey of North and South Kivu, Maniema, Haut Congo and Shaba established that some 8,000 locally displaced people in the Walikale area were in urgent need of assistance. ICRC has airlifted 5,713 displaced people from Kindu and Kisangani to their home areas. According to the report, numbers of IDPs have been exaggerated. It points out that in Kalemie for example, figures of 20,000 were distorted and aid agencies say the real number is nearer 6,000.

* UNHCR said yesterday it had repatriated a total of 400 Rwandan refugees from Kapanga in DRC, close to the border with Angola. They have been taken to Cyangugu on board eight flights.

* Foreign ministers of Rwanda, Burundi and DRC are due to meet in Kinshasa today to discuss reviving the dormant Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL). Salvator Matata, CEPGL secretary-general, told Reuters the three would meet with economic experts. He said everything had been held in abeyance because of crises in the three countries, but it was now necessary to restart economic activities.

* The Congolese capital Brazzaville was reported quiet today after the fragile ceasefire was shattered yesterday, as militias loyal to ex-president Denis Sassou Nguesso reportedly opened fire on parliament to prevent members of the constitutional council from taking their oath. The ex-president denied his troops were targeting parliament, but acknowledged the building had been hit in renewed clashes. The swearing-in ceremony went ahead. A military camp across the River Congo in Kinshasa was hit by seven shells from the Brazzaville side. AFP reported DRC Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha as saying the incident was aimed at involving his country in the conflict. DRC radio, broadcasting from Bunia, today said the authorities in Kinshasa had issued a "final warning" to the warring sides in Brazzaville after the shelling incident. The government warned that if shells continued to fall on Kinshasa, it would have to "take measures to defend national territory".

* On the diplomatic level, West African leaders meeting in Lome, Togo, yesterday expressed support for sending an African peacekeeping force to Congo, with Senegal and Togo pledging troops. UN-OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes, Mohamed Sahnoun, who has been attempting to mediate in the Congo conflict, also attended the Lome talks. France said yesterday it was prepared to provide logistical assistance and equipment for such a force.

* First details emerged of Rwandan refugees in the Bilolo camp, just outside Brazzaville, whose fate remained unknown during the fighting. According to ICRC, Kinshasa, the camp has been empty for the last two days and it is believed the refugees, numbering some 5,000, have gone deeper into Congolese territory, although they have not been sighted. UNHCR established that nine Bilolo refugees had arrived in the port city of Pointe Noire.

* UNHCR said it would send a protection team to Central African Republic (CAR) to screen some 800 Rwandan refugees who fled there, AFP reported. Members of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe are believed to be among them, and if this is established they will lose their refugee status, a UNHCR spokesman in Geneva said.

* UNICEF's representative in Bujumbura Michel Sidibe has urged support for moderates in Burundi, including President Pierre Buyoya, to ensure the country does not "explode". He told a press briefing in New York on Friday that since Buyoya took office, security in the countryside had improved, a negotiation process was in place and refugees were being repatriated. However, he noted the child malnutrition rate in displaced people's camps had doubled since 1993 from six to 12 percent and the standard of living in camps was very poor. Over 100,000 children were without any kind of support, he said. In the latest security incident on Saturday, an anti-tank mine exploded on a dirt track about 100 metres off the main road near Kirekura towards Bubanza.

* The opposition Sudanese National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has vowed to step up its armed struggle against the regime of President Omar el-Bashir. The alliance, which groups southern rebels of the SPLA and northerners opposed to the regime, discussed operational matters at a conference in the Eritrean capital Asmara last week. According to AFP, NDA foreign affairs representative Mansur Khalid warned companies

working in war zones to suspend operations because they could become targets. Conference participants decided to give "moral and material support" for "the final assault", he said.

Eritrea has accused Sudan of plotting to assassinate President Isayas Afewerki. A press release issued by the Eritrean foreign ministry said Sudan had sent a high-ranking intelligence officer to Eritrea last November to infiltrate the NDA and carry out the act. The statement said the officer, named as Captain Nesredin Babakar Aba Al Khairat, had undergone extensive training for his mission which was "conceived at the highest levels". The allegation included President Bashir and Parliament Speaker Hassan al-Turabi in the list of involved officials.

* Sudan has denied renewed allegations that slave trading is underway in the country. AFP said a Canadian missionary group - Crossroads Family of Ministries - claimed it had bought 319 Sudanese slaves, most of them children, in April and set them free. According to the group, the slaves were Dinkas from southern Sudan. The slave traders were reportedly members of the Arab-speaking Rizagat clan which has clashed with the Dinkas.

* Leaders of the G-7 group of top industrial nations, meeting in Denver, have pledged more help for developing countries in Africa, although they are divided on the form it should take. US President Bill Clinton called for more trade and investment, while his French counterpart Jacques Chirac was in favour of more aid. However a final statement promised increased trade and said assistance would continue. The provision of aid was linked to promoting democracy and liberalising trade. Regarding DRC, summit participants said on Saturday that elegibility for aid would depend on respect for human rights.

Nairobi, 24 June 1997, 14:45 gmt [END]

[Via the UN DHA Integrated Regional Information Network. The material contained in this communication may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. UN DHA IRIN Tel: +254 2 622123 Fax: +254 2 622129 e-mail: irin@dha.unon.org for more information. If you re-print, copy, archive or re-post this item, please retain this credit and disclaimer. Quotations or extracts from this report should include attribution to the original sources mentioned, not simply "DHA".]

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Great Lakes: IRIN Update 200, 6/25/97

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IRIN Emergency Update No.200 on the Great Lakes (25 June 1997)

* Trouble again flared up in Goma, in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, after CARE's compound was subjected to a robbery last night. Humanitarian sources said the assault was carried out by armed men and the compound was extensively looted, including a car, radios, cash and personal belongings. No injuries were reported. Shooting was heard in the Katindo area of the town later the same evening. In the early hours of this morning, the army mounted cordon and search operations in the Mabunga neighbourhood, arresting anyone without an ID. Reports say hundreds of people are possibly being held at the local football stadium.

* Shooting broke out in Kisangani yesterday after DRC soldiers went on the rampage, apparently dissatisfied with the pay they had received. Local reports said Tutsi members of the army were paid in dollars, while other Congolese were paid in local currency or not at all. A number of soldiers reportedly went to the local jail and smashed down the doors. Consequently, some of the prisoners escaped, causing anxiety among the local population. Several houses belonging to aid agencies were also looted.

* Small groups of Rwandan refugees have begun emerging from hiding around Shabunda, Katchunga and Lulingu in eastern DRC, where UNHCR estimates there are some 20,000 refugees. The UN Secretary-General's spokesman told a news briefing yesterday their movement was due to relief operations in the area started by UNHCR and NGOs last week. In addition, local authorities told UNHCR staff that the large military presence in the region had been withdrawn and refugees who had been living in the villages were coming out of hiding to seek relief. According to the spokesman, they were mostly in good health. Repatriation to Rwanda was due to start later this week, he added.

* Eritrean President Isayas Afewerki arrived in Kinshasa on Monday for talks with DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila aimed at developing cooperation between the two countries, according to Congolese radio broadcasting from Bunia. The radio listed Eritrea, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and Ethiopia as "friendly countries" to DRC.

* Sudan has denied allegations by Eritrea that it was planning to assassinate President Isayas Afewerki. According to Sudanese radio, Minister of State for External Affairs Mustafa Uthman Ismail described the claim as "fabricated". He challenged Eritrea to put the alleged plotter on trial, saying Sudan had no officer by the name mentioned in the Eritrean statement issued yesterday. The minister accused the Sudanese opposition based in Eritrea of "insulting Sudan's reputation without any evidence".

* The Ugandan army yesterday claimed it was in control of the situation in western Uganda after rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) overran the town of Bundibugyo last week. AP quoted an army officer as saying the rebels had been pushed back to the Ruwenzori mountain area on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). However, reports from the area indicated civilians were still fleeing their villages in the direction of Fort Portal. AP reported that the ADF apparently has a base at Lume in DRC, in the Ruwenzori foothills.

Ugandan radio yesterday reported that teams of the local Red Cross and ICRC had started providing relief aid to victims of the fighting in Bundibugyo. It said the Red Cross had sent maize flour, beans, vegetable oil, blankets and soap to Fort Portal in addition to its emergency stocks in Kasese. Medical equipment will also be sent to the area. In a press statement, the Ugandan Red Cross said its teams wold continue to monitor the unfolding humanitarian situation. According to local sources, about 1,000 Ugandans have fled into the Boga area of DRC to escape the fighting. * Calm returned to Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic, yesterday after clashes between army mutineers and members of an African peacekeeping force. Four African soldiers were reported wounded in fighting earlier in the day. The CAR Red Cross estimated over 60 people were killed in the violence which broke out over the weekend, and hundreds of people had fled the city.

* A senior officer who deserted the former rebel movement UNITA claimed the group was planning to launch a fresh war in Angola. According to AFP, Col Rafael Kassanja told reporters in Luanda yesterday that UNITA troops were regrouping in the north and centre of the country. He said UNITA had still had good military equipment "that was used in Zaire". Some 1,500 UNITA troops were involved in current fighting with army forces in northern Angola.

* The World Bank is to make available $US 125 million to Tanzania to support its Structural Adjustment Programme, although part of the amount is conditional. The Bank's representative to Tanzania, Ron Brigish, told journalists in Dar es Salaam yesterday that $US 25 million earmarked for restructuring the National Bank of Commerce would be withheld until adequate preparations for splitting the bank's functions had been completed. Another $US 15 million would be withheld until the World Bank was satisfied with measures taken to liberalise the petroleum industry.

On Monday, the Bank held preliminary talks with the new DRC government on ways to deal with the country's huge debt burden. Finance Minister Mawapanga Mwana Nanga said separate commissions would work on domestic and foreign debt issues. The Bank's delegation leader Callisto Madavo described the meeting as very constructive.

* IRIN marks its 200th daily Great Lakes update today with a brief recap of what the network stands for and who it serves. The Integrated Regional Information Network, a unit of DHA, was formed in October 1995 to promote information exchange among the humanitarian community in Africa's Great Lakes region. IRIN currently has 1,300 direct subscribers in 47 countries who then redisseminate to many more individuals and organisations. Its work is supported by Australia, Belgium, ECHO, Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, UK and USA and it distributes up to 5,000 pages of news and information per day gathered in the region by a team of information officers. IRIN updates, analyses and alerts cover the range of political, economic and social issues which affect humanitarian work in the region. IRIN particularly encourages agencies and individuals to collaborate with the network in establishing and broadening information flows within the wider humanitarian community.

Nairobi, 25 June 1997, 16:00 gmt [ENDS]

[Via the UN DHA Integrated Regional Information Network. The material contained in this communication may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. UN DHA IRIN Tel: +254 2 622123 Fax: +254 2 622129 e-mail: irin@dha.unon.org for more information. If you re-print, copy, archive or re-post this item, please retain this credit and disclaimer. Quotations or extracts from this report should include attribution to the original sources mentioned, not simply "DHA".]

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Great Lakes: IRIN Weekly Round-up, 6/30/97

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[The weekly roundup is based on IRIN daily updates and other relevant information from UN agencies, NGOs, governments, donors and the media. IRIN issues these reports for the benefit of the humanitarian community, but accepts no responsibility as to the accuracy of the original sources.]

[Please note today's daily update is incorporated in this report]

IRIN Weekly Roundup 10-97 of Main Events in the Great Lakes region covering the period 24-30 June 1997.

DRC: Insecurity continues in east

There were reports of continuing insecurity in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. On Tuesday, CARE's compound in Goma was extensively looted by armed men who took away a car, radios, cash and personal belongings. No injuries were reported. On the same day, shooting broke out in Kisangani after DRC soldiers went on the rampage, dissatisfied with the pay they had received. Local reports said Tutsi members of the army were paid in dollars, while other Congolese were paid in local currency or not at all. Security problems were also reported in the Fizi area where a group opposed to the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL) was said to be staging a small rebellion. A rebel leader, Charles Simba, interviewed by the BBC, accused DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila of being "sent by Tutsis to attack Zaire". He claimed a "big fight" was underway in the area.

DRC: Authorities reject part of UN rights probe

The UN advance team investigating alleged human rights abuses against Rwandan refugees in eastern DRC met government officials to discuss plans for the probe. However, the DRC authorities have rejected some elements of the proposed investigation, namely the composition of the Joint Investigative Mission as nominated by the UN Commission on Human Rights. The authorities also said the investigation should cover an expanded period: 20 March 1993 to 17 May 1997. UNHCR reported that small groups of refugees had begun emerging from hiding around Shabunda, Katshungu and Lulingu, in part because the large military presence had been withdrawn from the area. Plans were afoot to repatriate them. Meanwhile, local people in the Mbandaka area told BBC that refugees had been killed by ADFL troops and their bodies thrown into the Congo river.

DRC: Tshisekedi freed after arrest

DRC opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi was released on Friday after being arrested by soldiers the previous evening. He was taken from his house along with members of his family shortly after addressing a student rally in defiance of a government ban on political meetings.

DRC: Socialist style economy, minister says

DRC Planning Minister Babi Mbayi announced the DRC economy would be run along socialist lines, Bukavu radio reported on Saturday. He said the authorities were determined to clean up the country's image by reforming the economy.

Morocco: Mobutu admitted to hospital

Former Zairean leader Mobutu Sese Seko was said to be in a good condition after he was admitted to the cardiology ward of the Avicene hospital in Rabat, Morocco, on Friday. The Moroccan news agency said Mobutu underwent "radiological vascular intervention" following heavy internal bleeding.

Rwanda: DRC refugees protest against camp conditions

DRC refugees from the Banyejomba ethnic group (of Tutsi origin), who fled the North Kivu area of ex-Zaire in 1995/96, on Friday staged a demonstration at Mudende camp in Gisenyi, northwest Rwanda, Rwandan radio reported. The refugees were complaining about lack of food aid and delays in delivering the small amount of aid available. The radio said government and aid officials were working out how to resolve the problem.

Tanzania: Some DRC refugees to be repatriated

UNHCR announced on Friday it was preparing for the first organised voluntary repatriation of DRC refugees in the Great Lakes region. It said some 5,000 DRC refugees in Kigoma, Tanzania, had requested help in returning to their villages across Lake Tanganyika. Most of the returnees are said to be civil servants and businessmen from Uvira. Local authorities from Kigoma and South Kivu met in Kigoma to discuss the repatriation of refugees. Tanzania is hosting a total of about 93,000 DRC refugees.

DRC: Acute malnutrition reported in 13 percent of Uvira children

A UNICEF-financed nutrition survey from 16-29 May established a 13 percent acute malnutrition rate among children in the Uvira region. The survey covered a total of 1,740 children under five years of age. In response to the study, UNICEF is planning to support the establishment of four nutritional centres in the Uvira area which will be run by Initiative Humanitaire Africaine (IHA).

Burundi: Violence continues

There was more unrest in Burundi after 12 people were killed by an anti-tank mine in Bubanza province. Army spokesman Isaie Nibizi claimed the mine was laid by rebels. In the southwestern Kanyinkoko area, 13 people were abducted by intruders and extensive shooting was heard in Rumonge on Wednesday night. On Tuesday night, security forces ambushed a gang of "assailants" in Bururi province, killing at least one of them, the Burundi news agency reported.

Burundi: Kenya eases sanctions

Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi announced his government had lifted a ban on Burundi's importation of petroleum products through Kenya. He also said Kenya was considering allowing Kenya Airways to resume flights to Bujumbura, adding that the Kenyan government believed it was time to lift the sanctions on humanitarian grounds. Regional countries partially lifted the economic embargo against Burundi at a summit in Arusha in April. Interviewed by the BBC's Kirundi service, Commerce Minister Gregoire Banyiyzako said he hoped other countries would follow Kenya's example. He said the economic situation was slowly improving in the country and if the trend continued, the siutation would soon return to normal.

Burundi: UNESCO-sponsored conference postponed

A UNESCO-sponsored conference in Geneva on "Building the Future in Burundi", due to have been held 30 June-2 July, was postponed. The meeting was aimed at promoting dialogue between various political and civilian parties in Burundi. A UNESCO representative, speaking on Burundi radio, said there had been a problem obtaining visas for some of the participants. UNESCO will announce a new date later.

Burundi: IDPs emerging from Kibira forest

WFP reported that over 140 people were arriving daily at the Rwegura site in Burundi's Kayanza province, mainly from the Kibira forest. Many of them were in extremely poor condition and displayed clear signs of malnutrition. Others were arriving from areas in Bubanza and Cibitoke where insecurity was preventing humanitarian aid from reaching them. Action Contre la Faim was conducting a nutritional survey and WFP was planning a food distribution.

Rwanda: 14 killed in separate incidents

"Armed infiltrators" from the ex-FAR and Interahamwe killed 10 people and wounded 20 others in separate attacks in Ruhengeri province on Wednesday, the Rwandan News Agency (RNA) reported. Citing military sources, it said five people were killed and 17 wounded in a raid on a market at Bugarama trading centre. In another incident, five people were killed and three wounded when a taxi from Kigali was attacked seven kilometres south of Ruhengeri. In western Rwanda, a Chinese engineer and three Rwandans were killed on the road between Kibuye and Gitarama after ex-FAR members ambushed the vehicle they were travelling in. AFP quoted the Chinese embassy in Kigali as saying the attack occurred on Tuesday near the village of Kivumu.

Rwanda: Eritrean president pledges cooperation

Eritrean President Isayas Afewerki, who visited Kigali last week, pledged to promote defence and security cooperation with Rwanda. However he told a news conference, broadcast by Rwandan radio, that any talk about defence and security was purely defensive and there was "no intention of invading anyone". He told the same news conference that Sudan was out to "destabilise everyone to spread its ideology", but that the Sudanese people did not need any outside intervention to "settle scores" with the Khartoum authorities. He said Eritrea had "shown restraint" concerning Sudan.

Sudan: No plot to kill Isayas, authorities say

Sudan denied allegations by Eritrea that Khartoum was plotting to assassinate President Isayas Afewerki, describing the claims as "fabricated". Meanwhile the opposition National Democratic Alliance vowed to step up its armed struggle against the regime of President Omar al-Bashir. SPLA leader John Garang claimed the military situation in southern Sudan was very favourable for the rebels. On Sunday, SPLA rebels announced they had taken two key garrison towns, Tali and Shambi, and that the city of Juba was now within SPLA artillery range. The same day, Bashir said his government was ready to meet outlawed political parties but not if the talks were based on giving up Shariah law. According to AFP, a rebel military commander, quoted by the 'Al Hayat' newspaper, claimed Sudanese rebels were planning to paralyse Khartoum by seizing the Rosieres power station which supplies 80 percent of the capital's electricity needs and blocking the main supply road between Port Sudan and Khartoum.

Uganda: Thousands said displaced by Bundibugyo fighting

WFP led a UN mission to Bundibugyo in western Uganda, after thousands of people were displaced by fighting between the army and rebels from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). According to the mission, an average of 400 people a day were arriving in Bundibugyo from the surrounding mountains with very few possessions. In the town itself, there were currently some 8,000 displaced and a further 20,000 people were believed displaced in the district. The independent 'Monitor' newspaper on Saturday said security officers and civil servants, who fled Bundibugyo, were given 48 hours by Interior Minister Maj Tom Butine to return to work or face disciplinary action.

Uganda: Museveni blames army leadership for Bundibugyo unrest

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni blamed poor leadership in the army for the trouble in Bundibugyo, the state-owned 'New Vision' reported on Saturday. He said when the army received news the rebels were coming, it deployed troops at the border and left the town unprotected. Museveni denied there was a significant presence of ex-FAZ and ex-FAR members among the rebels. In the north, where government troops are battling rebels from the Lord's Resistance Army, he said army units had become a "network of stealing".

Uganda: About 50 killed in northern clashes

Today's edition of the 'New Vision' reported that about 50 people were killed in fighting between rebels and soldiers in the Agago district, near the northern town of Kitgum. According to the report, LRA rebels raided the district on Friday, burning 46 homes.

Angola: UN mission investigates IDPs in north

A UN-NGO mission to Andrada in Angola's Lunda Norte province established there were 5,191 registered displaced people in the town, fleeing fighting in the area between Angolan troops and the former rebel UNITA movement. Displacement south of Andrada was said to be continuing and groups of people from Luia and Cachimo were arriving in Maludi and Luaco. The municipal administrator of Andrada told the mission that a group of 180 Rwandan and Burundian refugees had reportedly arrived northeast of Canzar on the DRC border. UNHCR meanwhile said it had repatriated a total of 400 Rwandan refugees from Kapanga in DRC, close to the Angolan border.

Angola: UNAVEM III to be replaced by new mission

The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye, told reporters in New York on Friday that the recent fighting between government troops and UNITA in the north of the country was never intense. He said clashes broke out after Angola tried to strengthen security along the border with DRC to prevent foreign forces entering its territory. However UNITA did not accept that explanation and accused the government of trying to gain control of the north's diamond mines. Since last Friday, he said, no movement of government troops had been reported in Angola. Blondin Beye announced the UNAVEM III mission would be wound up on July 1 and replaced by a new operation, the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA). He claimed both sides were still committed to the peace process.

Congo: Ceasefire again violated in Brazzaville

Fighting again broke out in the Congolese capital Brazzaville over the weekend, shattering another ceasefire extension agreed by the warring sides of President Pascal Lissouba and former president Denis Sassou Nguesso. AFP said intense machine-gun fire exploded near the French embassy on Sunday morning and by late afternoon, heavy weapons were being used. Earlier, the UN had approved the formation of an African peacekeeping force and joint UN-OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes, Mohamed Sahnoun, continued his mediation mission. Four African countries have already agreed to send troops. ICRC was forced to evacuate four delegates to Kinshasa after fighting made it impossible for them to continue their work. ICRC believes several thousand people have been displaced as a result of the conflict.

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IRIN Emergency Update No.203 on the Great Lakes (1 July 1997)

* A bodyguard was killed and the wife of Burundian parliamentary speaker Leonce Ngendakumana injured when her car detonated a mine in Bujumbura's hillside Kiriri suburb last night. Studio Ijambo radio told IRIN the blast occurred on a street inhabited by mostly FRODEBU officials, after a party given by FRODEBU's secretary-general Augustin Nzojibwami. FRODEBU is the main opposition party in Burundi, which celebrates its 35th independence anniversary today.

* Hundreds of students boycotted classes at Bujumbura university yesterday and staged a sit-in to demand payment of their grants for April to July, AFP reported. It said staff were blocked from leaving the campus. A student leader complained to AFP that there was no paper, no soap and no pens.

* One of the few Tutsi members of the rebel National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD), Stany-Claver Kaduga, has died in a Rome hospital. According to the BBC's Kirundi service, Kaduga who is a former vice-president of the national assembly, died last Thursday. He was a member of FRODEBU before joining CNDD in Uvira, where it is believed he sustained injuries during fighting between the ADFL and Zairean troops last year. The radio said Kaduga had been in Rome attending peace talks between the government and the CNDD.

* Humanitarian sources have described the overall situation in Burundi's Nyanza Lac area as alarming. The regular water supply is still cut off since rebels sabotaged the pipes at the end of April, health centres have been looted and no longer function, and most schools are closed. The sources point out that 80,000 inhabitants of Nyanza Lac, along with displaced people, need clean water. They are currently drinking contaminated water from Lake Tanganyika.

* FAO has pointed out that despite a good harvest in Burundi's 1997-B season, both retail and wholesale prices remain high. In Bujumbura, the weekly food expenditure of an average family was estimated at 10,425 Burundi francs (FBu), as of June 27. The pre-sanctions estimate was 5,228 FBu.

* Rwanda said it was behind the Democratic Republic of Congo's demand that the UN human rights investigation into alleged atrocities be modified. Foreign Minister Anastase Gasana told a news conference in Kigali yesterday that "certain members" of the proposed team had "preconceived ideas" about the newly-formed DRC. "Why is the commission just looking into what happened recently, forgetting that this explosive situation in eastern Zaire was created over a year ago?," he asked. Kabila has called for expanding the investigation to cover the period from March 1993 to May 1997, as well as for changes in the composition of the investigating team. Gasana rejected allegations that his country was involved in massacres of Rwandan refugees in eastern DRC.

* Belgium has called for a new type of cooperation with Rwanda, saying it prefers ties that are "more operational, more flexible and more coherent at the European level", AFP reported. Belgian Secretary of State for Cooperation and Development Reginal Moreels, who is visiting Rwanda, said bilateral cooperation was mostly in the domain of health, education, agriculture and justice. Moreels also said he had had constructive talks with Rwandan officials on alleged refugee massacres in eastern DRC. According to Rwandan radio, Vice-President Paul Kagame who met Moreels yesterday said Rwanda believed cooperation with Belgium was very important. Kagame said responsibility for the refugee problem lay "with those who organised the Zone Turquoise ... and with those who did not carry out their work of separating Interahamwe, ex-FAR and former politicians from innocent refugees."

* Refugees returning to Rwanda from DRC, interviewed by the BBC's Kirundi/Kinyarwanda service, claimed disease and hunger had killed a large number of their compatriots in the forests of eastern DRC. They said life in the jungle had been very tough. The radio also interviewed UNHCR's representative in Rwanda, Roman Urasa, who said it had become difficult to repatriate refugees because they were now so scattered and it was problematical to gather them together for repatriation. He added that some UNHCR activities in Ruhengeri prefecture, such as building houses for the returnees, had been stopped because of insecurity. WFP activities in Ruhengeri have been suspended until further notice.

* Uganda has poured cold water on efforts by Rwanda, Burundi and DRC to revive their economic grouping, the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL), according to the 'EastAfrican' weekly. Ugandan Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Rebecca Kadaga, said the grouping would probably fail because Rwanda had applied to join the East African Cooperation (which groups Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania) and Burundi had expressed interest in joining. At the recent OAU summit in Harare, President Yoweri Museveni described any regrouping of Rwanda, Burundi and DRC as unnecessary, the newspaper said.

* On Sunday UNHCR led an inter-agency mission to Beni, north of Goma, in eastern DRC to confirm reports that up to 10,000 Ugandan refugees had crossed into the country to flee fighting between the Ugandan army and rebels from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the Bundibugyo area. The mission was able to establish that most of the refugees appeared to be located in a pocket of land surrounded by the Virunga National Park on one side and Uganda on the other. The bulk of refugees have reportedly gone to Beni, and are staying in outlying areas, with a smaller group going north to the Bunia area. Because of time constraints and the remoteness of the location the mission had few first-hand encounters with the refugees, but the local authorities report some refugees are suffering from malaria and gastrointestinal problems while others have knife or machete wounds. The local authorities are spreading the word that aid is available so that the Ugandans will come out of the inaccessible places where they have taken refuge. WFP said food aid has also reached the town of Bundibugyo, so the refugees may be tempted to return if the situation is secure.

* UNHCR is awaiting a response from the DRC authorities regarding the repatriation of some 13,000 DRC refugees from the Kyaka II and Nakivale camps in southwest Uganda. The repatriation, scheduled for August, may now be affected by the fighting in Uganda's Bundibugyo area.

* US troops are to travel to Uganda next month to train battalion-size military units in international peacekeeping, the 'Washington Post' reported yesterday. It said the mission was part of the Clinton administration's plan for an all-African military force capable of responding to unrest on the continent. Similar training is planned for troops in Senegal, to be followed by Tunisia, Ethiopia, Mali and Malawi later in the year.

* Uganda has told John Garang's Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to leave the Karamoja area where they have reportedly been grouping. Today's 'New Vision' newspaper quoted Minister of State for Defence Amama Mbabazi as saying Uganda had told all Sudanese, both government and rebel troops, that they should respect its borders. The 'New Vision' noted that reports of several thousand SPLA fighters settling in Kidepo national park in northeastern Uganda first came to light in the Paris-based Indian Ocean newsletter on June 14.

* Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has declared a general amnesty for armed opponents of his government to mark the eighth anniversary of his rule, AFP reported. He announced that the amnesty covered "everyone from the south and the north who carried arms so that he can come back home". Bashir also said his government was willing to improve relations with neighbouring countries. In the next few days, a commission would be set up to draw up a permanent constitution for the country, he added.

An investigation is underway in Sudan after the security authorities detected a network engaged in subversive acts, Culture and Information Minister Brig.al-Tayeb Ibrahim Mohamed Khayr announced. According to SUNA news agency, he claimed the network was administered by "remnants of the dissolved communist party supported by foreign circles". Several arrests had been made. The minister said the discovery came "within the context of a series of plots being woven by the Eritrean regime of Isayas Afewerki".

* The Democratic Republic of Congo yesterday celebrated its first independence day with Laurent-Desire Kabila as president. A number of African leaders, including Congolese President Pascal Lissouba, arrived in Kinshasa to take part in the festivities. A planned opposition rally failed to materialise after state radio and television warned potential demonstrators against taking to the streets. BBC Swahili radio said security was much in evidence with soldiers deployed throughout the city. According to the radio, turnout for the celebrations was not as great as expected. It said many people stayed at home in support of the opposition. In his address to mark the event, Kabila urged developed nations to help reconstruct his country.

Sudanese first Vice-President Lt.Gen al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih, who attended the celebrations, claimed relations between the two countries were solid. Sudanese radio also reported DRC Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha as saying DRC was trying to support and develop relations with Sudan.

* The UN Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) which today replaces UNAVEM III (UN Angola Verification Mission) will initially have a four-month mandate until 31 October. In a unanimous vote yesterday, the Security Council decided to establish MONUA and urged both the Angolan government and UNITA movement to complete the peace process. It particularly called on UNITA to provide information on all armed personnel under its control to facilitate demobilisation, as well as for the speedy conversion of UNITA into a political party. The Security Council noted that MONUA's role would be to assist the Angolan sides in consolidating peace and national reconciliation. Meanwhile, Angolan radio yesterday warned that war could break out again in the country. "The signs are everywhere," it said.

Nairobi, 1 July 1997, 15:15 gmt [ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No.205 on the Great Lakes (3 July 1997)

* Concern is growing among the humanitarian community that the Burundi government's intention to start dismantling regroupment camps may be followed by a policy of villagisation. Humanitarian sources say that in Kayanza, which may be the first province to start dismantling the camps, government plans are not to send people back to their often isolated homes but to relocate them along roads. New houses are to be built along existing roads and new roads constructed where there are none. New roads would effectively encircle small villages which, from a military point of view, would be easy to monitor. The government originally justified the regroupment camps as the only way of separating civilians from armed Hutu rebels waging war against the army in the countryside. Living conditions in many of the camps are poor with high levels of malnutrition. The international community, which has pressurised for their closure, has called for people to be sent home. Humanitarian sources say they will not support the roadside settlement scheme, which effectively implies that military criteria to take precedence over humanitarian issues. * Heavy shelling late yesterday in the Congolese capital Brazzaville shook windows in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), just across the Congo river, AFP reported. President Pascal Lissouba's troops and those loyal to former president Denis Sassou Nguesso blamed each other for the renewal of fighting. An estimated 10-15,000 Congolese have already fled to Kinshasa and the exodus continues. The Makelekele hospital has been a target of shelling and sick and wounded have been forced to flee, according to UNICEF which supports the hospital. Meanwhile, the Malian government said it was ready to take part in a UN/OAU peacekeeping operation in Congo.

* The DRC government yesterday called on the UN to take seriously its demands concerning the UN human rights mission charged with investigating allegations of massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees in the east of the country. Speaking to AFP in Kinshasa, Reconstruction Minister Etienne Mbaya reiterated his government's refusal to accept the participation of Roberto Garreton in the mission. Garreton earlier published a report accusing the troops of President Laurent-Desire Kabila, then rebel leader, of carrying out massacres of refugees and Zaireans. A UN human rights team arrived in Kinshasa on 20 June and a second team of investigators was due to arrive on 7 July.

* A UNICEF local staff member was shot in the chest in Lubumbashi, DRC, on Monday after soldiers opened fire on a bus in which he was travelling. The incident was sparked off by a road accident in which a girl was knocked down. The UNICEF worker is being evacuated to Johanesburg for treatment today. Tensions are said to be running high in Lubumbashi and soldiers are described as "trigger happy."

* Former Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko yesterday underwent an intensive medical examination for "health complications" at a military hospital in Rabat, Morocco, Reuters reported. Mobutu, who has prostate cancer, was last week admitted to a civilian hospital in the northern port of Tangiers.

* Zambian radio said today the Zambian government would soon start training military personnel and police in neighbouring DRC. Home Affairs Minister Chitalu Samba said some logistical issues needed to be sorted out first by a reformed joint commission between the two countries.

* State-owned Radio-Television National Congolaise has resumed television transmissions via satellite. Satellite transmissions from the then Zairean TV were last monitored by the BBC in December 1994. They were suspended because of lack of funds to repair earth station equipment and to pay Intelsat fees.

* Army mutineers in the Central African Republic (CAR) yesterday signed a ceasefire agreement with African peacekeepers in the capital Bangui, AFP reported. Under the accord, both sides will end all hostile actions from today. It also aims to stop the problem of looting, and deals with ways of reintegrating the rebels into the government forces.

* Humanitarian agencies in CAR have appealed for emergency assistance for an estimated 80,000 people displaced in the Bangui region by the conflict. Most urgent needs are shelter materials as it is currently the rainy season. Some people are said to be in a poor condition and in dire need of assistance. * French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine said yesterday that France wanted to rethink its relations with Africa and "in no way seeks disengagement", AFP reported. Vedrine said the days of unilateral action were over and in future France's policy would have a "European dimension" and would take into account the Anglophone African countries.

* The Ugandan government is taking steps to deal with famine in northern and northwestern areas, Uganda radio said yesterday. The Prime Minister Kintu Musoke told parliament that 852 million shillings had already been released to purchase food relief and a further 500 million would be released later. Stricken areas include Gulu, Kitgum, Arua, Kasese and Wayo, which are affected by attacks involving rebel groups.

* The 'Monitor' reported yesterday that eight civilians, four Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels and two Ugandan government soldiers were killed in clashes 30 kms south-east of Kitgum in northern Uganda between June 25-28. The newspaper quoted a military commander as denying earlier press reports that up to 50 people had been killed in the fighting.

* The Sudanese press agency SUNA reported today that the Khartoum government hopes to negotiate the return of 114 prisoners of war captured by Ugandan troops during an attack on the southern Sudanese town of Yei in March. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said earlier he first wanted the return of 21 schoolgirls abducted last October by Khartoum-backed Ugandan rebels.

* Fighters with the former Angolan rebel UNITA attacked a village in the south of the country at the weekend killing two people, including a child, and burning 60 houses, AFP reported yesterday.

* Kenyan reformists today called on people to turn up in large numbers on Monday, 7 July, at rallies planned in 49 locations around the country. The rallies, organised by the National Convention Executive Committee, are the latest action aimed at forcing constitutional reform before this year's

elections. President Moi yesterday warned youth to ignore the rallies, which the government have declared illegal. Today, police used teargas to disperse university students demonstrating over the introduction of strict new measures on the payment of fees. Meanwhile, Kenya's Attorney-General Amos Wako said today that the radical Islamic preacher, Sheikh Khaled Balala, would be allowed to return to Kenya from Germany after earlier attempts to bar him.

Nairobi, 3 July 1997, 15:15 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No.206 on the Great Lakes (4 July 1997)

* Differences remain today between the UN and President Laurent-Desire Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) over the terms and membership of a human rights mission due to investigate allegations of massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees and Zaireans by Kabila's troops. The human rights team was due to start its investigations on Monday. But at a press conference in Kinshasa yesterday, Minister for Reconstruction Etienne Mbaya announced that the mission would be postponed because no agreement had been reached between the government and the UN. The DRC authorities are insisting that Roberto Garreton be withdrawn from the team as his previous report, alleging mass killings by the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL), was not objective. "We do not like the report," Mbaya told the BBC Swahili service. "If we have to have another report, he should not be part of the delegation." The authorities are also demanding that the mission extends its brief to include all events since March 1993, before the genocide in Rwanda and the mass exodus of refugees to what was then Zaire. Mbaya said seven days would be needed to issue entry visas to the investigators. Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said yesterday he was determined to "get to the facts" in the disturbing reports of mass killings of refugees. If it was impossible to field the team as originally planned, he said, "we have to come up with other means."

* There is still international concern about the erratic access allowed to humanitarian agencies trying to work with refugees in eastern DRC, Oxfam said in its latest Great Lakes bulletin. Oxfam says the "loosening of the standards of control" of the ADFL and increasing insecurity make it more difficult for agencies to work there. In neighbouring Rwanda, Oxfam says its work, especially in the north and northwestern areas, is "greatly restricted by insecurity and, in a different way, by government restrictions."

* Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame today denied that Rwanda had played any role in massacres of refugees in DRC, AFP reported. Speaking at celebrations to commemorate the Rwandan Patriotic Front's capture of Kigali in 1994, Kagame said they had done everything they could to make sure the majority of the refugees came home. * More than 200,000 Rwandans and around 35,000 Burundian refugees who had been in the DRC are still unaccounted for, the UNHCR said yesterday. The figures do not take into account "violent and non-violent deaths." More than 20,000 refugees are known to be still in DRC, and thousands of others in Congo, the Central African Republic, Angola and Tanzania.

* Humanitarian sources say around 3,500 Rwandan refugees are moving towards Gabon, after fleeing DRC and being assisted temporarily at Bilolo, Congo. A couple of hundred of them are reported to have already reached Gabon's southeastern border with Congo.

* Humanitarian sources estimate the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in eastern DRC to be around 190,000. Nearly 95,000 are in the Masisi, of whom the majority are people from the Hunde ethnic group prevented from going home by continuing insecurity. They are likely to resettle among their host communities. Some relief assistance reaches the Masisi through missionary groups and Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF). Other smaller clusters of IDPs are in Walikale, Kirotshe, Rutshuru, South Kivu and Shaba areas.

* The UN Security Council yesterday expressed its backing for the deployment of a peacekeeping force to be sent to Brazzaville in Congo. The force of up to 1,000 would be made up of mainly African troops and its main job would be to secure Brazzaville airport. No country has yet offered to lead the mission, however, and it is unclear how it would be financed. Sporadic shelling was reported today in Brazzaville, where forces of President Pascal Lissouba are battling militia loyal to former president Denis Sassou Nguesso. The OAU/UN Special Representative for the Great Lakes, Mohamed Sahnoun, warned that the fighting in Brazzaville may spill over into Kinshasa across the Congo river in neighbouring DRC. Shells fired from Brazzaville have landed in Kinshasa. Sahnoun said an international force could prevent the escalation of the conflict into Kinshasa, and stop the flow of arms into Brazzaville. It would also protect humanitarian agencies as they assist the victims of the conflict. Congolese radio yesterday issued a stern warning that members of the armed forces caught engaging in "theft, pillage and acts of banditry" would be "neutralised."

* The Executive Director of UNICEF, Carol Bellamy, said yesterday she was deeply concerned about thousands of children who have been abducted by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda. 5-8,000 children are estimated to have been taken captive from Gulu and Kitgum and trained as fighters or kept as slaves or wives for rebel commanders, many of whom operate from bases in southern Sudan. A Ugandan delegation recently went to Khartoum to discuss with the Sudanese authorities the release of a number of schoolgirls held by the LRA. In a statement from New York, Bellamy urged the international community to pledge its support for the release of the children. She suggested that the Sudanese government would find a "most suitable forum" for announcing their release at the forthcoming Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) heads of state summit due to be held in Nairobi on 8 July.

* A Catholic church official yesterday made an urgent appeal for humanitarian assistance to be sent to Rumbek in south Sudan, AFP reported. Monsignor Caesar Mazzolari, the Apostolic Administrator for Rumbek Diocese, described the state of people there as desperate. Rumbek was captured from the Sudanese government by the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in April. Since then, many people have been returning home from refugee camps in northern Uganda and from other government-held areas in south Sudan. Mazzolari said they had received no assistance and were in "dire need."

* A two-day workshop organised by a German institute, the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), entitled "Improving African and international capabilities for preventing and solving violent conflict, the Great Lakes Region crisis" ended today at the Hilton Hotel, Berlin.

* Uganda's 'Monitor' said today a team of 10 Ugandan police officers were in Kinshasa to train a unit of men handpicked by Kabila into an anti-riot squad.

* Burundi's Internet service, running on a trial basis, currently has around 50 subscribers, including the World Bank, UNHCR, Oxfam amd other non-governmental organisations. It is run privately and uses a VSAT satellite dish. Their e-mail address is: admin@cbinf.com

Nairobi, 4 July 1997, 15:15 gmt

[ENDS]

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Great Lakes: IRIN Update 207, 7/8/97

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IRIN Emergency Update No.207 on the Great Lakes (8 July 1997)

* Ugandan rebels abducted more than 30 children and looted food supplies in an attack on Mongula refugee camp in northern Moyo district Saturday. The abductees were all boys between 11-15 years-old. The raid is the third in a month on the Sudanese refugee camp bringing the total to 41 people seized by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The WFP in Uganda reports there are complaints among the 11,000 refugees at Mongula that their security concerns are not being taken seriously. The attacks mark an escalation in rebel activity in the north since an offensive by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in March routed LRA and West Nile Bank Front bases across the borders. Gulu district, traditionally the centre of LRA operations, has remained quiet but raids have continued in neighbouring Kitgum. AFP reported that a rebel group looted houses and burnt vehicles at Namakora Mission, 40 kms east of Kitgum town Saturday night.

* Ugandan peace-keepers due to be trained later this month by US Green Berets will not be deployed outside the OAU framework. Replying to concern expressed by an unnamed OAU official reported in the EastAfrican weekly, Minister of State for Defense, Amama Mbabazi, told the Monitor newspaper that the army is interested in building its capacity rather than unilateral military deployment without OAU consent. The US Special Forces team is due in Uganda for two months on July 21 to provide battalion-size instruction on convoy protection, mine clearance, communications and civil-military relations. Similar training under the Warren Christopher initiative for an African rapid intervention force is to be provided for Senegal, Ethiopia, Ghana and Malawi.

* An article by Ugandan Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Rebecca Kadaga in the 'EastAfrican' has expressed her country's "joy" over Laurent-Desire Kabila's accession to power in DRC, both for economic and security reasons. Kadaga, who is in charge of regional cooperation, said it would now be easier to contain the DRC-based rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), while economically it would be possible to discuss creating a common infrastructure to facilitate the movement of goods and services. She denied Uganda was involved in the military struggle to remove ex-president Mobutu from power, but acknowledged cooperation with other Great Lakes countries and South Africa "in charting out possible solutions for a peaceful transition". One of Uganda's main priorities now, she said, was economic cooperation with eastern DRC.

* The sale of Czech fighter planes to Uganda is on hold, the New Vision reported today. Minister of State for Defense, Amama Mbabazi, said he has not received a formal offer of sale. The Czech Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hellena Bamasova, said on May 31 that Prague was willing to sell the ground attack/trainer jets, but the paper says a scheduled meeting between her and Mbabazi never took place.

* Calm returned to Kenyan cities and towns today in the aftermath of Monday's bloody clashes between opposition supporters demanding constitutional reforms and the security forces which left at least nine people dead in the worst political violence seen in seven years. The opposition's umbrella National Convention Executive Committee (NCEC) has called for new demonstrations for Wednesday and the disruption of the six-nation IGAD summit. "Our position and demand of the IGAD meeting is no reforms, no IGAD meeting," the NCEC said in a statement. Demonstrations without police permits are illegal under Kenya's draconian public order laws and the police authorities said they would again disperse any political gathering that takes place Wednesday. The opposition argues that repeal of the public order laws are among the constitutional reforms needed to ensure free and fair elections later this year.

* The fate of 114 Sudanese POWs held by Uganda since March and Somalia's continuing instability is expected to head the agenda of the two day IGAD summit starting in Nairobi Wednesday. A diplomatically isolated Sudanese president is expected to join heads of state at the meeting from regional neighbours Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda. Somalia's chair will remain vacant.

* UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan will brief the Security Council today on his plans for a new human rights mission to investigate abuses in the DRC. UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said Monday that the DRC government would allow the probe to go ahead if the mission's composition was changed. Kinshasa had objected to the inclusion of Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, Roberto Garreton, claiming his previous report accusing the ADFL of mass killings was not objective. Responding to accusations of UN surrender by human rights groups, Eckhard said "the secretary-general feels it is not who does this report but that it be done."

* Unidentified gunmen killed at least 13 people in Kinshasa's working class districts Sunday night in a wave of attacks that has deepened a climate of insecurity in the city. Residents say it is difficult to tell whether it was ex-FAZ soldiers or rogue ADFL troops that were responsible for the shootings. Interior Minister Mwenze Kongolo described the killings as the work of "criminals trying to sabotage the government" of President Laurent-Desire Kabila, Reuters reported.

* UNHCR says the planned repatriation of Congolese refugees from camps in Kigoma, Tanzania, remains on hold. Humanitarian sources say hesitant Tanzanian authorities would like to first see an official statement from the DRC welcoming back the refugees, and a tripartite meeting involving UNHCR to discuss security and operational concerns. Meanwhile, 6,510 Congolese have spontaneously returned to the DRC and a further 314 have crossed into Zambia as of June 22.

* UNHCR staff were prevented by the DRC authorities Friday from reestablishing a collection point for the repatriation of Rwanda refugees at Karuba, 45 kms east of Goma, for a third week in a row following the May 29 killing of four refugees and an aid worker in the area. UNHCR spokesman Peter Kessler described the situation as "unacceptable" after Kinshasa had assured complete access and that the agency was "very concerned" about the fate of the refugees.

The UNHCR has opened two new airlift sites for the repatriation of Rwandan refugees. In the first sortie flown Sunday from Shabunda, DRC, 48 refugees were carried home, and 84 were transported Saturday from Lukolela in Congo-Brazzaville. The airlift operation evacuated 507 people between 3-6 July.

* DRC President Laurent Kabila arrived in Windhoek Monday on a two day state visit. The possibility of Namibia drawing hydro-power from the Congo River is expected to top the agenda in talks.

* Tension continues along the DRC border, Angolan Interior Minister, Andre Pitra Petroff, has warned. Before leaving for talks in Kinshasa yesterday, Petroff told Angolan TV that the presence of UNITA and Zairian soldiers on the border continues "to cause serious problems."

* The price of a river crossing on dug-out canoe to Kinshasa increased to 10,000 CFA as fighting continued in Brazzaville last week. An estimated 20,000 refugees have fled to Kinshasa since the political violence began in Brazzaville on June 5 and according to UNHCR around 1,300 to 2,000 of them are sheltering "in extremely difficult conditions" on barges in the city's port.

* Three people were injured, one seriously, when a pick-up truck detonated an anti-tank mine in the Nkuli Hill area of Bujumbura Sunday night, Radio Burundi reported.

* Emissaries of former Tanzanian president Julius Nyrere left Bujumbura yesterday after three days of talks aimed at paving the way to peace negotiations later this month in Arusha between the government and Burundian opposition parties. No details of the talks about talks were released, but the BBC Kirundi/Kinyarwanda service reported that Charles Mukasi, leader of the mainly Tutsi UPRONA party, said he would not attend Arusha but representatives of his party would. PARENA, the party of former president Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, rejected any meeting with the Hutu rebel CNDD. Arusha is planned as a pre-agenda forum for follow up talks after the Rome meetings earlier this year between the government and CNDD rebels.

* An envoy of Burundian President Pierre Buyoya had talks with the Tanzanian authorities in Dar es Salaam last week to discuss alleged rebel infiltration into Burundi from western Tanzania. Public Health Minister Dr Juma Mohamed Kariburyo told the 'EastAfrican' weekly his country believed rebels were using Tanzanian territory as a rear base to attack the Burundian army in the Bururi and Makamba regions. He said he had come to Tanzania to request joint border meetings between the two countries and to urge the Tanzanians to move refugee camps far away from the border. According to the newspaper, part of the minister's mission was also to persuade the Tanzanian government to lift remaining economic sanctions against Burundi.

* Suspected Hutu guerrillas killed an estimated 20 people in three attacks in central Rwanda over the weekend, AFP reported yesterday. Two of the raids occurred in the Nyakabanda commune of Gitarama prefecture, 40 kms northwest of Kigali. On Friday, Mushabati commune near Gitarama town was attacked by what the military authorities described as forest-based "enemy groups".

Nairobi, 8 July 1997 15:40 GMT [ENDS]

[Via the UN DHA Integrated Regional Information Network. The material contained in this communication may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. UN DHA IRIN Tel: +254 2 622123 Fax: +254 2 622129 e-mail: irin@dha.unon.org for more information. If you re-print, copy, archive or re-post this item, please retain this credit and disclaimer. Quotations or extracts from this report should include attribution to the original sources mentioned, not simply "DHA".]

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IRIN Emergency Update No.208 on the Great Lakes (9 July 1997)

* Rwanda's Vice President and Defence Minister Paul Kagame told the Washington Post in an interview published today that the Rwandan army planned, led and directly fought in the rebellion that toppled Mobutu Sese Seko. He said that not only did Rwandan troops spearhead the final assault on Kinshasa, their presence was critical in the capture of three other major cities - Lubumbashi, Kenge and Kisangani in the then Zaire. Kagame claimed that Rwanda effectively created the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) of Laurent-Desire Kabila. He said the plan for the rebellion was hatched in 1996 in response to international indifference over Hutu militia attacks on Rwanda launched from the refugee camps across the border. He noted Rwanda's first goal was to "dismantle the camps." The second was to "destroy the structure" of the Hutu army and militias based in and around the camps. The third broader goal, Kagame said, was to topple Mobutu. It would have been "more suitable" if Congolese rebels had done most of the fighting, Kagame said, but "I don't think they were fully prepared to carry it out alone." And, he added, "we thought doing it halfway would be very dangerous. We found the best way was to take it to the end." The Washington Post stated that Kagame, answering allegations of human rights abuses did not deny "the possibility of individual atrocities" by Rwandan troops, but criticised the United Nations for trying to "deflect the blame". He argued that "their failure to act in eastern Zaire directly caused these problems, and when things blew up in their faces, they blamed us".

* DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila, on a state visit to Namibia Monday, accused Western governments of a smear campaign over allegations of massacres by the ADFL in eastern Congo. Botswana radio, reporting his visit, said Kabila claimed France was among those responsible for the campaign. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Tuesday that he was replacing an investigation by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Commission led by human rights rapporteur Roberto Garreton and will instead dispatch his own team of experts. The new team, whose composition is yet to be announced, will have the same mandate as the commission's. In response to the UN announcement, Kabila noted that the probe's time frame remains contentious. According to the South African news agency SAPA, Kabila said the region is littered with mass graves. "If they have to start their investigation they must start... when the violations of human rights started in that area when (former President) Mobutu (Sese Seko) was in power." * Jacques Matanda ma Mboyo, a former senior member of radical opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi's Sacred Union, called Tuesday for a "popular front of armed resistance" to the Kabila regime, AFP reported. Matanda ma Mboyo, in Paris, urged the formation of "armed combat cells" to overthrow Kabila's "neo-Mobutuist" regime. He said he was "open to any alliance aimed at establishing the rule of law and the eradication of Tutsi militias and genocidal armies" which, according to him, are "occupying" the former Zaire. He stressed, however, that "a fundamental disagreement on the way to fight" the new regime separated him from Tshisekedi. A long-standing opponent of Mobutu, Matanda ma Mboyo was also part of an attempted rapprochement with Kabila earlier this year which was rebuffed by the ADFL leader. He said the role of the "armed combat cells" would be to paralyse the economy and eliminate "from our territory the Ugandan, Rwandan and Burundian forces which occupy it".

* The US government would help reorganise and train the army of the DRC if asked, the Washington Post reported today. William Twaddell, assistant secretary of state for African affairs said "there may be a role for us on advising on the structure and perhaps even providing at a later date assistance on how they can go about training and organizing their military." Acknowledging that the ADFL has been accused of atrocities against Rwandan Hutu refugees, he said discipline remained a serious problem. He added that "the United States has a clear stake in the policy decisions taken by the new leadership in the Congo" and that US relations with the DRC will depend on progress in creating a broad-based transitional government, respect for human rights, and cooperation with the UN-led probe into the alledged massacres.

* Sudan accepted a framework for negotiations to end the nation's long-running civil war at the IGAD summit today, clearing the way for a resumption of talks, Reuters reports. "The summit welcomed the acceptance by the government of Sudan of the declaration of principles as the basis for discussions and negotiations," the five regional leaders said in a statement. Peace talks between Sudan's president, Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir, and southern Sudanese rebel leader John Garang, mediated by regional states, broke down in September 1994 when Sudan refused to sign the declaration of principles. "The summit requests the chairman of the IGAD peace initiative to take the necessary measures aimed at a speedy resumption of the negotiations," the IGAD communique said.

* Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni boycotted the IGAD summit in Nairobi today in protest over Sudan's failure to return a group of schoolgirls abducted by Ugandan rebels, the New Vision claims. The 24 schoolchildren were kidnapped from St Mary's College, Aboke, last year by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and are allegedly being held in Sudan. "Museveni said he could not come to Nairobi unless he won the release of the schoolgirls" the paper quoted an unnamed diplomat as saying. Kampala accuses Khartoum of backing the LRA.

* Retreating rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), battling the Ugandan army along the DRC border since June, have taken over President Yoweri Museveni's former bush headquarters in western Uganda, The Crusader reported Monday. The paper said hundreds of civilians have been fleeing Kabalore district since July 1, heading to both Kasese and Fort Portal.

* Senegal has agreed to contribute 520 troops and lead an African peacekeeping force in Congo-Brazzaville, AFP reported yesterday. The planned 1,800-strong mainly African force has still to be formally approved by the UN Security Council and resolve logistical questions. When deployed, the peacekeepers are expected to secure Brazzaville airport, the scene of fighting between forces loyal to President Pascal Lissouba and the militia of his predecessor, Dennis Sassou Nguesso.

Meanwhile, heavy firing reverberated through Brazzaville last night forcing the city's Mayor Bernard Kolelas, the chief mediator, to postpone negotiations called for today. Sassou Nguesso rejected the talks after Lissouba refused to accept a transitional government to organise elections due July 27. Instead, Lissouba argues that the constitution allows him to govern for three months beyond his original mandate, during which time elections would be held. Sassou Nguesso however wants a 'political' rather than a 'constitutional' solution.

* AFP reported the start of reconciliation talks today in Bangui between army mutineers, the military and African mediators to reintegrate the rebels

into the Central African Republic's regular army. A ceasefire has held since last week. The fighting erupted in January over pay arrears but escalated into an all-out campaign to oust President Ange-Felix Patasse. A series of army mutinies have broken out in the capital since May 1996. * President Pierre Buyoya fears he has made more foes than friends after a year in power in an ethnically polarised Burundi. "I am concerned for my safety," Buyoya told AP Saturday, "we are in a situation of civil war." The threats he faces includes potential coup attempts by members of his own Tutsi ethnic group, concerned that he is willing to make too many concessions to Hutu rebels as the price for a peace settlement. An assassination plot was foiled in March, leading to the arrest of five people including two soldiers. Buyoya believes he needs two more years before Burundi is ready for a return to constitutional order.

* A Kigali court sentenced a former city official to death on Monday on genocide charges and ordered him to pay the equivalent of around six million dollars in civil damages, AFP reported. The court found Amuri Karakezi, the former head of Kigali's Biryogo sector, guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity. He was accused of having organised the killings of Tutsis and Hutu opponents of the then Rwandan regime in the Moslem Nyamirambo district of Kigali, traditionally a less ethnically divided community. Karakezi is to appeal against the sentence. Special courts set up to try genocide suspects in Rwanda have so far sentenced more than 50 people to death.

* A group of exhausted and malnourished Rwandan refugees have managed to cross Congo-Brazzaville and make it into Gabon. At least 365 refugees, including 24 children, left their camp at Bilolo, 30 kms north of Brazzaville, to escape the fighting around the capital. A UNHCR team has been sent from Kinshasa to assess the situation. Gabon is the sixth country known to be sheltering Rwandan refugees. The others are Angola, CAR, Congo-Brazzaville, DRC and Malawi.

* Around 314 Congolese refugees crossed back into the DRC from Zambia as of June 22. [This item corrects IRIN Update 207].

Nairobi, July 9 1997, 15:30 GMT [ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No.211 on the Great Lakes (Tuesday 15 July 1997)

* More than 574,000 people are currently displaced from their homes and living in over 250 sites in Burundi, according to the latest estimates from DHA Burundi. The figure includes displaced, regrouped and repatriated populations. It does not, however, include an unknown number of "dispersed" people. Amnesty International yesterday released a report accusing the government of a policy of forced regroupement applied almost exclusively to Hutus resulting in "a pattern of mass human rights violations". Amnesty claims "hundreds of men, women and children have been extrajudicially executed in the process." According to the report, 'Burundi: Forced relocation, new patterns of human rights abuses', Hutus that remain behind "risk being killed by the Burundian security forces." "Conditions within camps vary," the report says, but "all are overcrowded and insanitary, some are life-threatening. In some camps, hunger and disease are rampant" and movement is restricted. The policy, Amnesty alleges, "is a long-term military strategy of forcible relocation of a particular ethnic group, carried out not for their protection but to undermine support for Hutu rebel groups." The policy has also "effectively created military zones where the authorities legitimise violations of human rights."

* UNICEF has called on the Rwandan government to give youths accused of mass killings a fair trial. A statement made at the UNICEF Cologne office yesterday, ahead of the August opening of trials for young suspects, urged that questioning of child detainees must be speeded up and those suspected of minor offences should be released. As of May 27, a total of 2,641 youths (defined as under-18 by UNICEF) were being held in over-crowded Rwandan prisons. More than 500 children are being detained with their mothers and a further 500 suspects were under the age of 14 at the time of their alleged crimes and therefore not criminally responsible under Rwandan law. Conditions for Rwanda's 110,000 prisoners awaiting trial are deplorable. Hygiene is extremely poor and sexual abuse of children by other detainees is common, UNICEF notes. The UN agency has trained 48 judicial police inspectors to set up case files for child detainees and is in the process of setting up special youth wings in existing prisons.

* Rally for the Return and Democracy (RDR) leader Francois Nzabahimana wants allegations of civilian killings by Rwandan troops in the former Zaire investigated and the accused brought to trial. "We believe that (the) Kigali (government) fought in Zaire and the international tribunal (on Rwanda) should judge all Rwandans who had killed other Rwandans either in 1994 or today, that Kagame's troops should be judged by the international tribunal," he said in a BBC Radio Kirundi/Kinyarwanda broadcast yesterday. "Then we can say that Rwanda can be rebuilt and Rwandans reunited."

* Rwanda will have to feed 1.6 million more people than last year in the second part of 1997 mainly as a result of refugee returns, but total crop production is estimated to increase only marginally, according to the latest FAO/WFP crop and food supply assessment mission. There has been a rise in land area under cultivation over last year but it is still below pre-crisis levels. The late settlement of returning refugees for the second planting season, land disputes, and lack of inputs has limited the expansion of land preparation. The report also notes that rains have been late and irregular throughout most of the country. Total crop production is forecast to increase by six percent over the same season last year, but the output of pulses - the main source of protein for most Rwandans - is expected to fall by 25 percent. Access to purchased food "has become exceedingly difficult, due to soaring prices," the mission notes, and the food situation is precarious in the prefectures of Kibuye, Gikongoro, Butare, South Kigali and some communes in Gitarama. These areas will need continued food aid as well as input aid. For the whole of 1997, the cereal and pulse deficit is estimated at 192,000 tons, of which 134,000 would be required as food aid. The mission recommends the "immediate" launching of an inputs distribution programme in time for September's preparations for the 1998 season and the creation of an early warning system as a first step to rebuilding the agriculture ministry's statistical base.

* According to a recent USAID Food for Peace and Famine Early Warning System food security report, other factors affecting food production in Rwanda include: "reduced labor migration among returnees due to their continuing wait for mandatory identification cards, and the jailing of many men, suspected of involvement of the genocide, who normally would be farming; and insecurity in the western region of Rwanda."

* UNHCR's Pam O'Toole today said that although access to Rwandan refugees in eastern DRC has improved - "partially because there are fewer military operations going on" - the agency still experiences "a few problems with access" from the authorities. In a briefing in Geneva, O'Toole noted that around 200,000 Rwandan refugees are still unaccounted for. "Of course we are deeply concerned about them," she said, as search and rescue operations were finding smaller concentrations of refugees to repatriate than a few months ago. Some may not want to be found, she acknowledged, but added: "we do fear that many, many others may have died after being forced into the rainforest from refugee camps."

* Sources in eastern DRC report that the North Kivu Provincial Security Committee has, for the first time, publicly acknowledged that undisciplined elements of the army and police have been responsible for some of the insecurity in Goma. Previously, provincial authorities had attributed all such incidents to the ex-FAR or Interahamwe. The provincial authorities are in the process of creating barracks north of Goma for all soldiers and police who are now scattered in residences throughout the town.

* The nutritional status of internally-displaced Congolese in the Fizi area of South Kivu is "very poor" with many people suffering from malnutrition, according to humanitarian sources. The displaced have fled fighting south of Fizi. Existing nutritional centres in Fizi are reportedly lacking food supplies, basic materials and trained personnel, humanitarian sources report.

* UNHCR had evacuated a total of 160 Rwandan refugees by yesterday from Amisi in Kasese, eastern DRC, on the third day of its latest air operation. From Amisi, 52 refugees were then repatriated to Cyangugu by Buffalo, leaving 108 persons in the Amisi transit centre. Another 60 refugees are expected to be flown out of Kasese today. The profile of the airlifted group is: 31 men, 43 women, 51 children, and 35 unaccompanied children. UNHCR is considering a "small compensation package" for the communities that sheltered the refugees over the last months.

* Provisions have been sent to a re-education camp in Kitona, Western DRC, where thousands of ex-FAZ soldiers were reportedly protesting over conditions. The situation is now "relatively calm" after Reuters reported three deaths in disturbances over lack of food and proper sanitation which

had caused an outbreak of disease.

* A joint UN/NGO/DRC mission to evaluate the situation of Ugandan refugees around Beni at the tip of northern Kivu has found only seven families. The Ugandans are all in good physical condition and integrated with Congolese families. The team received reports of up to 500 refugees in Kamango, a remote enclave surrounded on the DRC side of the border by the National Park of the Virungas. Previously there were thought to be as many as 5,000 refugees in Kamango. There have been unconfirmed reports that some refugees have returned to Uganda because the situation had calmed and there was no food to sustain them in Congo.

* Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels abducted 18 people Saturday from Dzaipi village near Pakele, northern Uganda, humanitarian sources have confirmed. The abductees, all Ugandan nationals, were marched south to join a larger LRA formation, according to witnesses who managed to escape.

* Sudanese rebels announced the capture of two key towns in southern Sudan yesterday, saying they had opened a new front in Upper Nile state. Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) spokesman in Asmara, Yassir Arman, told AFP that the capture of Tindilo in Eastern Equatoria state removed the last government bastion before Juba, the main city in the south. He said nine SPLA divisions captured the Upper Nile garrison town of Ayod on Sunday with the aid of Nuer tribesmen and other southerners opposed to a recent peace agreement between the Khartoum regime and seven southern splinter groups.

[IRIN's weekly information exchange meetings continue to be held every Wednesday at 9:00 am at the IRIN office in Gigiri, Nairobi. All humanitarian agencies are welcome.]

Nairobi, July 15 1997, 15:15 GMT [ENDS]

[Via the UN DHA Integrated Regional Information Network. The material contained in this communication may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. UN DHA IRIN Tel: +254 2 622123 Fax: +254 2 622129 e-mail: irin@dha.unon.org for more information. If you re-print, copy, archive or re-post this item, please retain this credit and disclaimer. Quotations or extracts from this report should include attribution to the original sources mentioned, not simply "DHA".]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 216 on the Great Lakes (Wednesday 23 July 1997)

* Khartoum has stopped supplying the Ugandan rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) with food supplies, according to a Ugandan military spokesman. Lieutenant Shaban Bantariza told the Kenyan Daily Nation that Sudan, which Uganda accuses of helping the LRA, continues to send arms to the LRA, but that food rations have been cut off as "Sudan is not finding much use in them". The LRA is reported to have attacked two villages near Kitgum on Friday and Saturday.

* The Ugandan army operations commander in the west, Lt Col Charles Angina is willing to meet the leader of the rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Fideli Miranawa, according to the Ugandan state-owned New Vision. Speaking on a private FM radio station, Angina said "I am willing to meet the rebel commander and discuss with him how to surrender".

The New Vision also reports that 50 people have been killed by ADF rebels since the attack on Bundibugo on June 16. The independent Monitor reported yesterday that another clash took place between the ADF and Ugandan national forces at Kyansozi, 30 km outside Fort Portal town on 20 July. BBC radio reported today that another ADF attack yesterday left eight dead and thirteen wounded. Six of the dead were displaced people staying in a primary school.

About 27,000 Ugandans are now thought to be in the Beni area of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, having fled fighting between the rebel Allied Democratic Forces and the Ugandan army. UNHCR reported yesterday that about 6,000 are in a village called Rwenzori and 20,000 in Watalinga, bothe close to the Ugandan border near the Ruwenzori mountains. The area is remote and UNHCR is looking into the feasability of repairing the airstrip at Buisega near the area to deliver supplies. UNHCR also reports the displacement of about 1,800 Congolese due to renewed fighting to the northwest of Goma, in the Masisi region.

The Ugandan army has recruited 700 former West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) rebels under the age of 25 and is training them at Gulu. Over seven hundred other rebels, including deputy WNBF commander Abdullatif Toya are still in detention awaiting trial in Kampala. * South Africa has agreed to resume arms sales to Rwanda, lifting a suspension imposed unilaterally in November 1996. A UN embargo against the government was lifted in August 1995, while UN reporting requirements on arms sales to the Rwandan government were totally lifted on 1 September 1996. An embargo remains in force against arms destined for non-governmental forces in Rwanda.

* Another suspect wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has been arrested in Kenya. Belgian Georges Ruggiu, a journalist with the inflammatory Radio Television Milles Collines was transferred to the ICTR's detention facilities in Arusha, Tanzania, today. Twenty people are currently held by the ICTR in connection with charges relating to the 1994 genocide.

* Genocide survivors in Murambi, Rwanda, have complained that 10-year prison sentences handed down to 10 people who confessed to genocide crimes in a recent trial were too lenient, reports Radio Rwanda. A recent report by the UN Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda (UNHRFOR) supported the confession procedure, which is provided for in Rwanda's Genocide Law. UNHRFOR also recommends that "separate detention facilities be established for those who decide to take part in the Confession and Guilty Plea Procedure and notes that the Government of Rwanda has agreed in principle to the establishment of such facilities".

* The Gabonese government is eager to repatriate some 1,200 Rwandan refugees who crossed Congo-Brazzaville to reach the country, but only 150 have expressed a willingness to return, reports UNHCR.

* Thirteen people were killed and two abducted in a rebel attack in Nyanza-Lac, Burundi on Sunday, a military spokesman told AFP yesterday.

* Kenyan pro-reform campaigners, including opposition politicians, were to present a list of demands to President Daniel arap Moi this afternoon. A National Convention Assembly conference held at Limuru in April had drawn up lists of targets for constitutional and legal reform.

* Tanzania is planning a military operation to flush out armed Rwandan bandits who are accused of eight recent armed robberies in Karagwe and Ngara districts, the Tanzanian Minister for Home Affairs, Ali Ameir Mohamed told the Daily Nation yesterday.

* Talks to resolve the conflict in Congo-Brazzaville showed little progress yesterday, while Congolese state radio today reported that more than 4,000 people have died in the clashes which began in June. Efforts to help 10,000 Rwandan refugees in northeastern Congo are hampered by deteriorating security in the area. UNHCR estimates that 20,000 Rwandans are in Congo-Brazzaville.

The UN is to send a peacekeeping survey team to the region to look into the creation of a peacekeeping operation in Congo-Brazzaville, UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said yesterday. "Both parties had agreed to cooperate with the team", Eckhard added. A UN peacekeeping mission had been requested by Congolese President Pascal Lissouba, while Senegal has undertaken to lead the force.

Nairobi, 23 July 1997, 15:20 GMT

[ENDS]

[Via the UN DHA Integrated Regional Information Network. The material contained in this communication may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. UN DHA IRIN Tel: +254 2 622123 Fax: +254 2 622129 e-mail: irin@dha.unon.org for more information. If you re-print, copy, archive or re-post this item, please retain this credit and disclaimer. Quotations or extracts from this report should include

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Great Lakes: IRIN Update 217, 7/24/97

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 217 on the Great Lakes (Thursday 24 July 1997)

* In a press release today, Ugandan rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) offered the release of 24 schoolgirls held since October last year in exchange for a ceasefire. The Ugandan government has rejected any conditions attached to the release of the girls, who the LRA claim are held in the northern districts of Gulu, Lira and Apach. Ugandan minister of state for foreign affairs Rebecca Kadaga further alleged that the girls are in fact in Sudan, a few kilometres outside Juba.

* UNICEF Goma yesterday revealed that while the rest of Africa has shown improvements in reducing under-five mortality rates, there has been only a 1% improvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the last 15 years. These and other statistics, from UNICEF's Progress of Nations 1997 report, launched this week, led UNICEF Goma's Lauchlan Munro to state "it is clear that the former Zairois regime abdicated its responsibilities towards children."

The DRC's rate of under-five mortality, at 207 per 1,000 births brings DRC to the 138th of 149 countries. Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda have also high rates, respectively of 176, 139 and 145. Burundi has the highest proportion of malnourished children of all countries of the Great Lakes, with an estimated 37% of the under-fives underweight.

* DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila is on an official visit to Eritrea, reports AFP, quoting the Eritrean Foreign Ministry official. While in Asmara, he will meet Eritrean President Issayas Afeworki.

* The Security Council has called on the parties in Angola to refrain from the use of force. A statement read by the Security Council president yesterday condemned the mistreatment of personnel of the United Nations and international humanitarian organizations in areas under the control of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Information supplied by UNITA with regard to the strength of its armed forces, the extension of state administration and the activites of its radio station was "neither complete nor credible". The statement said that the increasing tension in northern Angola is spreading to central and southern provinces with "very dangerous implications" for the peace process. Meanwhile, the Angolan defence ministry through a statement on state media said that the situation had become "critical", while alleging that UNITA had moved its northern Uige province headquarters to Santa Cruz on the border with DRC.

* The UN will shortly stop running regular humanitarian passenger flights to Bujumbura. The Kenyan Ministry of Transport has advised the World Food Programme - which used to manage the flights on behalf of the UN as part of humanitarian exemptions to regional sanctions - that agencies should use scheduled flights instead. Kenya Airways and other airlines are now authorized by the Kenyan Government to fly between Nairobi and Bujumbura. The first commercial service, by African Airlines, left Nairobi last weekend.

Burundi's Foreign Minister, Luc Rukingama told the BBC's Kirundi service yesterday that some countries had "helped a lot" during the sanctions imposed on Burundi but "we should not keep singing about it over radios and televisions..."

* Riak Machar, head of the South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF) told AFP yesterday that South Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rebels were battling government forces 50 kilometres north of the southern garrison town of Juba. Sudanese government forces hold Juba while many other towns in southern Sudan are held by the SPLA. Machar is aligned with Khartoum since a peace accord - rejected by the SPLA - was signed between several splinter rebel groups and the Islamist government.

The Sudanese parliament approved the peace accord yesterday after a three day special session. Under the peace deal, a coordinating council would run the affairs of southern Sudan for four years after which a referendum on the future status of southern Sudan would be held.

* IRIN's next information exchange meeting will be on Friday 1 August at 9.00 am. The meeting has been moved to accomodate the launch of the revised UN Appeal fro the Great Lakes. As usual, all humanitarian agencies are welcome.

Nairobi, 24 July 1997, 15:20 GMT

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 221 on the Great Lakes (Thursday 31 July 1997)

* Tanzania and Zambia have called for lifting economic sanctions against Burundi, but said a regional arms embargo should remain alongside the ongoing peace process, Tanzanian radio reported. A joint statement by President Benjamin Mkapa and his visiting Zambian counterpart Frederick Chiluba issued yesterday said an end to the economic embargo was necessary to ease the burden on Burundi citizens. The two presidents also urged the international community to render essential aid to the Democratic Republic of Congo to help rebuild the country.

* A spokesman for members of Burundi's opposition FRODEBU party, exiled in Tanzania, told BBC radio that investigations were underway to find the perpetrators of alleged assassination attempts against party leaders. The spokesman, Simba Rushatsi, described those responsible as "politicians opposed to FRODEBU efforts regarding peace and democracy". He said they were also against Nyerere's mediation efforts and attempts to bring the peace process to Arusha rather than continue with the ongoing talks in Rome. By attempting to kill FRODEBU leaders, they were trying to show there was no stability in Tanzania, he claimed. He refused to say categorically who was responsible because of the investigation. Yesterday, Tanzanian radio reported a FRODEBU statement as saying opponents within the party were behind the attacks.

* Meanwhile, Burundi's Institutional Reforms Minister Eugene Nindorera, who earlier said that next month's Arusha talks had been postponed, yesterday asserted that the Rome talks between the government and CNDD had been temporarily suspended. He told the BBC's Kirundi service it had become apparent that talks between the two sides had been unable to stop the war, and thus the dialogue should be extended to include all parties. However he pointed out that the Arusha meeting on August 25 faced serious problems "because we cannot hold serious talks while the war is continuing".

* Local press reports in Burundi claim CNDD has again launched a recruitment drive in the southern Makamba province and attempted to create parallel administrations in the communes of Mabanda and Vugizo. Heavy fighting between rebels and the military has been reported in Vugizo over the last few days.

* Six Burundians, convicted of taking part in ethnic massacres, were executed by hanging at Bujumbura's Mpimba prison early today, AFP reported. The six defendants - three Hutus, two Tutsis and one Twa - had all lost their appeals after receiving the death sentence. AFP said these were the first executions in Burundi since the early 1980s.

* An FAO/WFP report on the food situation in Burundi says food security has been deteriorating steadily since 1993 due to civil war, large population displacement and reduced agricultural production. The situation was further aggravated by the regional economic embargo imposed last July. The report, which is based on an assessment mission between 18 June and 1 July 1997, noted that malnutrition among adults and children was widespread and hundreds of cases of kwashiorkor and marasmus had been admitted to therapeutic units in the most affected areas. The report predicted that the food situation would deteriorate throughout the country in the coming months.

* Representatives from Burundi and DRC have followed up a meeting between the two countries' interior ministers which led to the opening of the common border earlier this month. Burundi radio quoted DRC's director-general of immigration, who was in Bujumbura, as saying there was already some free movement of people between the two countries. Uvira residents could cross into Burundi for a period of 72 hours without needing a visa in order to buy basic commodities. He also said that immigration officials from North and South Kivu would soon receive training in Burundi.

* The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has described as "premature" a decision by the UN Secretary-General to nominate a special representative for the country. AFP quoted diplomatic sources as saying DRC International Cooperation Minister Thomas Kanza assessed that the "time was not right" for the arrival of Robin Kinloch, who was appointed special representative by the Secretary-General earlier this month.

* The local authorities in North Kivu have expressed concern over increasing incidents of banditry in the province. According to the official Congolese Press Agency (ACP), provincial governor Leonard Kanyamuhanga Gafundi told a security meeting earlier this week that all "irregular" military activity should be resisted, including any arrests without a warrant after 6pm. Soldiers were ordered back to barracks and members of self-defence committees would henceforth be armed, he said. The governor expressed concern over the proliferation of arms in the province, alleging "beyond doubt" that this was due to the prolonged presence of Rwandan refugees in the area. According to ACP, Kanyamuhanga's concerns were echoed by the mayor of Goma, Kisuba Shebaeni, earlier this month who ordered that night patrols should be strengthened.

* A Rwandan official has announced the forthcoming resumption of discussions with Burundi over the issue of repatriating some 4,000 Burundian refugees from Rwanda. The sub-prefect of Butare province Vincent Ngezahayo told AFP that Rwanda was seeking a speedy solution to the matter as it believed the camps constituted a security problem in the south of the country. UNHCR has said it will not promote or facilitate the repatriation of Burundian refugees because of the security situation in their country.

* SPLA radio has broadcast a denial that pro-government south Sudan forces have recaptured some areas under SPLA control. Sudan People's Liberation Army spokesman, Commander Deng Alor, described the claim by Riak Machar, leader of the pro-government south Sudan parties, as "mere lies...in order to give the people the illusion he [Riak Machar] was capable of doing something". He denied that any battles had taken place with Machar's troops.

In another broadcast, the radio quoted Deng Alor as saying the SPLM/A was ready to begin talks with the Sudanese government but only if these were based on the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) declaration of principles.

* Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has described the situation in western Uganda as a "military challenge requiring a military solution". Ugandan radio said that during a tour of the western Kasese, Kabarole and Bundibugyo districts this week, Museveni promised to "flush out bad elements of former governments" from the area. He said the government had devised a plan involving the deployment of 3,000 extra troops and liaison with neighbouring countries. Museveni also ruled out peace talks with the rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).

* Ugandan police said two explosions in Kampala yesterday killed six people and injured over 40 others. A police statement issued today said the grenade blasts occurred last night near the Kibuye roundabout. The motive was unclear but enquiries were underway, police said.

* Kenya's High Commissioner to Uganda, Peter ole Nkurayia, yesterday denied Ugandan charges that its citizens in Kenya were being detained and harassed. According to PANA, he said the current security operations in Nairobi targeted all illegal immigrants, alleging that foreigners had been involved in recent rioting in the country. He said the Ugandan government was "over-reacting" to the measures. Uganda's state minister for foreign affairs, Rebecca Kadaga, on Tuesday summoned Nkurayia to protest against the detention of Ugandans in Kenya. * Angolan President Eduardo dos Santos yesterday rejected any outside involvement in arranging a meeting with former rebel UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi. According to PANA, presidential spokesman, Aldemiro Vaz Da Conceicao, said any such involvement was "untimely and uncalled-for". On Monday, Savimbi - who was on a visit to Cote d'Ivoire - had asked the Ivorian authorities to intervene in arranging a meeting with dos Santos. The spokesman said this was unnecessary because dos Santos had agreed to meet Savimbi in Angola.

UNITA radio today claimed five civilians were killed in Angolan army operations in Huila province over the last few days. It said 30 Angolan soldiers "invaded" the Ngongo area three days ago, killing the five and wounding many others. UNITA urged the UN observer mission (MONUA) to intervene.

Nairobi, 31 July 1997, 14:45 gmt [ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 222 on the Great Lakes (Friday 1 August 1997)

* Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa has denied that Burundian rebels are undergoing military training in his country. According to Tanzanian radio, he told visiting EU Great Lakes envoy Aldo Ajello yesterday that his government could not support such a move as it would derail the Burundi peace process. Mkapa stated he supported the efforts of peace mediator, Julius Nyerere, adding that Tanzania wanted to ensure Burundi was ruled by a democratic government. Meanwhile, Joint UN/OAU Special Representative to the Great Lakes region Mohamed Sahnoun said Tuesday's meeting with Nyerere and foreign envoys in Dar es Salaam to discuss Burundi all-party peace talks "went very well", a UN spokesman reported.

* Burundi has rejected the UN human rights investigator, assigned to the country for the past two years, Reuters reported, quoting diplomats. In a letter to the UN earlier this month, Foreign Minister Luc Rukingama said Paulo Sergio Pinheiro had produced "slanted and politically inspired reports". He claimed Pinheiro's reports were based on unproven allegations and that the investigator had not visited Burundi since President Pierre Buyoya came to power in last July's military coup. AFP today quoted a UN spokeswoman in Geneva as saying Pinheiro would not be replaced.

* The justice ministry in Bujumbura has issued a statement on the executions of six people yesterday, saying one of them was responsible for burning 70 Tutsi students alive. The statement said Firmat Niyonkenguruka was a former high school principal in the central town of Kimbimba who killed his students following the assassination of Hutu President Melchior Ndadaye in October 1993 and the subsequent unleashing of civil war. According to the statement, the remaining five were involved in the deaths of other people. The statement said the sentences were carried out to show that crime could not be committed with impunity. AFP noted that since war crimes trials started last year, 126 people have been sentenced to death by three Burundian courts in Bujumbura, Ngozi and Gitega.

* Burundi's former intelligence chief under the FRODEBU regime, Audifax Ndabitoreye, has accused Burundi and Rwanda of not reacting to the police round-up of foreigners in Kenya because they want exiles to be sent home. According to the BBC's Kirundi service, police came to arrest Ndabitoreye - who lives in Nairobi - but in the end he was not detained. However Burundi's ambassador to Kenya, Stanislas Nakaha, told the BBC he was doing everything possible to assist detained Burundian citizens, some of whom had been released.

* The IMF has announced it is withholding a US$ 205 million loan to Kenya because its reform measures have fallen short of IMF requirements, KTN television reported today. Finance Minister Musalia Mudavadi warned that the decision would have adverse affects on the Kenyan economy. Central Bank of Kenya Governor Micah Cheserem called for urgent damage limitation measures in the wake of the IMF decision, adding that the bank was considering whether to intervene to support the shilling. Yesterday, Cabinet Secretary Fares Kuindwa told a news conference the government did not condone corruption and was trying to stamp it out. Economic analysts have pointed out that the move, coupled with recent political unrest, is likely to have serious repercussions on foreign investment.

Kenya's opposition National Convention Executive Council (NCEC) has given the government five days "to show seriousness over the reforms issue" or face a nationwide strike next Friday, the Kenyan 'Daily Nation' reported today. It warned that the strike would be followed by "intermittent and thereafter intensified peaceful mass action".

South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo is to pay a three-day official visit to Kenya next week to discuss bilateral trade and African "conflict situations", AFP said, quoting officials in Pretoria. The South African government has expressed concern over clashes between demonstrators and riot police earlier this month in which several people were killed.

* WFP today announced the end of a major operation in Rwanda which provided six-month food resettlement rations to 1.2 million Rwandan returnees. The programme, in cooperation with the Rwandan government, was part of an overall package provided by UN agencies and NGOs to help reintegrate refugees. A WFP press release said refugees still trickling into Rwanda would receive food assistance on arrival and the situation would continue to be carefully monitored.

* Humanitarian sources reported continued fighting between Mai Mai militia and Banyamulenge soldiers in the Masisi area of eastern DRC. Some reports said the Mai Mai were joined by ex-FAR, ex-FAZ, Interahamwe and DRC rebels led by Charles Simba and were targeting Tutsis, some of whom had allegedly been massacred around the Ngungu area. Others reportedly fled to Goma and Sake. Insecurity continues in the Goma area despite additional security measures taken by the local authorities. An attack on World Vision's office last Friday was the latest in a series of attacks against NGO establishments.

* The Ugandan rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) has warned it will continue to "resist injustice" and save Uganda from "Tutsism". In a statement, the ADF told the 3,000 Ugandan army reinforcements in western areas of the country to "feel your heartbeat and quit when [sic] you can still feel it". Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni earlier ruled out peace talks with the ADF and announced the deployment of extra troops in western Uganda.

Museveni yesterday said east and central African nations were planning joint action against cross-border rebel movements. He told a rally in the western town of Kasese that those who "thought they could use Democratic Republic of Congo as their base" were doomed, AFP reported. "With fraternal relations existing between Uganda, Congo (Kinshasa), Rwanda and Tanzania, it is difficult for any criminal to commit crimes in one country and run to another," he said.

* Sudanese Vice-President Maj-Gen Zubayr Muhammad Salih yesterday called on all rebels to return home and take part in "building and defending the nation", Sudanese radio reported. Addressing the opening session of the constitutional technical committee, he said the occasion

marked a new page in the peace process. The committee is a sub-group of a National Constitutional Commission which should soon be created. Salih urged all Sudanese people to contribute "meaningful" ideas to the committee.

* Angolan Interior Minister Andre Pitra Petroff has accused the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) of allowing separatist Cabinda rebels to maintain bases on its territory, AFP reported. He was speaking after two days of talks with Congolese officials on recent tensions around the Cabinda enclave. Petroff claimed the Cabinda Enclave Liberation Front (FLEC-Renewed) had bases in DRC "because it isn't possible for FLEC to launch such violent attacks without a rear base". Angolan radio meanwhile quoted DRC Interior Minister Philippe Bikinkita, who discussed the issue with Petroff in Cabinda yesterday, as saying his government would not tolerate any Angolans in DRC who did not respect peace.

* France has officially announced the closure of its army base in Bouar, western Central African Republic, and the gradual withdrawal of its troops from CAR. Defence Minister Alain Richard said in Bangui yesterday the measure was in keeping with France's decision to "change the geographic distribution of its forces", and was taken on purely military grounds.

* The UN Technical Survey Team today arrived in Brazzaville to assess the need for a peacekeeping force in the city, Congolese government radio announced, according to AFP. It quoted the radio as saying over 4,000 people had died in six weeks of fighting between troops loyal to President Pascal Lissouba and supporters of ex-president Denis Sassou Nguesso.

Nairobi, 1 August 1997, 14:00gmt [ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 224 on the Great Lakes (Wednesday 6 August 1997)

* Burundi's parliament wants to work with official mediator, former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere in forthcoming peace talks between the government and rebels, PANA reported Monday. "The National Assembly will play the role of moderator between the Burundian brothers", House Speaker Leonce Ngendakumana suggested. Burundi's all party peace talks are expected to take place in Arusha on 25 August. Ngendakumana cautioned that the meeting may fail if the parties decided to tackle the most contentious issues, such as army reform and the return to constitutional legality as was the case in the Rome earlier this year. "We must draw the required lessons from the Rome experience," the speaker advised. "What will be negotiated in Arusha will not be power per se, but rather a project for society."

* A FRODEBU MP was ambushed and killed along with his driver in southern Burundi at the weekend as he was travelling to Tanzania, agencies report. Paul Sirabahenda was the 23rd MP of the mainly Hutu party to have been killed since the assassination of elected Hutu President Melchior Ndadaye in a 1993 coup attempt.

* Rwandan radio announced yesterday that four insurgents were killed and one captured in Kigali Rural prefecture by security forces and civilian collaborators.

* An EU ministerial delegation which visited DRC on 4 and 5 August has expressed satisfaction over talks held with DRC officials. A press statement issued today by Luxembourg, which currently holds the EU presidency, described the talks as constructive and said the delegation would recommend the resumption of economic cooperation, suspended in 1992, given the "favourable political climate" in DRC. The EU ministerial troika, made up of Luxembourg, Netherlands and UK, also hailed DRC's democratisation process and pledged the EU's assistance in democratisation and reconstruction. The two sides also discussed the refugee issue, with the EU welcoming DRC's acceptance of the UN's investigative mission. The UN was urged to "proceed without delay", the press statement said.

* The DRC's deputy interior minister has warned of a "destabalisation" plot against the government. General Faustin Munene alleged in a local radio interview reported by AFP that opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDSP) and Antoine Gisenga head of the Unified Lumumbist Party (PALU) were planning demonstrations, and "manipulating young people who loot and kill civilians" in an attempt to discredit the government. Munene cautioned against "any attempt at rebellion" in the DRC.

* Uganda is to train troops of the DRC, the state-owned 'New Vision' said yesterday, with the first contingent of 50 soldiers expected to arrive by the end of the month. They will be instructed in combat operations techniques, "handling of civilians in war situations" and "politicisation". According to the private 'Monitor' newspaper, Uganda is also to set up and train a DRC anti-smuggling unit that will target the flow of illegal diamonds from the country. Both the soldiers and the anti-smuggling force will apparently be trained at Kaweta, 100 kms from Kampala.

* Stressing regional cooperation, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said the Great Lakes are now "Bantuphone" as a result of the area's new political arrangement, the 'Daily Nation' newspaper reported today. Opening talks in Kampala Tuesday with Tanzanian President Benjamin Mpaka, Museveni said his government is seeking greater integration with friendly neighbours through improved road networks in the region. Mpaka is in Uganda on a four day visit.

* Five Ugandans have been charged with treason over the alleged smuggling of weapons destined for the rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). The five were arrested in Arua, northwestern Uganda when a combined police and army raid uncovered guns, ammunition and military uniforms, the 'New Vision' reported yesterday. The Ugandan authorities claim the equipment came from the southern Sudanese town of Juba and was to have been ferried to the ADF, which is fighting government forces and attacking villages in western Uganda.

Meanwhile, the Ugandan police defused a grenade late Monday planted in a Kampala theatre, AFP reported. The discovery comes in the wake of three grenade attacks in the city in the past week which have killed 10 people and injured 40 others.

* Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos has applauded the DRC government's "major effort ... to stabilise the country politically and economically." In a speech at a dinner given for DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila broadcast by Angolan TV yesterday, Dos Santos asked the international community to "be patient and support the Congolese government's programmes" and added that "short, but firm and safe steps" are better. Kabila arrived in Angola Tuesday for a two day visit aimed at strengthening bilateral ties.

* A special Joint Defence and Security Subcommission has recommended more border posts and tighter policing along the Angolan-Congo (Brazzaville) border, Angolan TV said yesterday. The commission met in Cabinda last week to review security concerns, particularly the movement of opposition UNITA forces between the two countries. The commission, led by Angolan Interior Minister Santana Andre Pitra Petroff and his Congolese counterpart Philippe Bikinkita, also stressed the need for the voluntary repatriation of Angolan refugees and the "systematic expulsion of all individuals who pose a threat to the security of either country".

IRIN's daily update no.222 of 1 August 1997 contained a paragraph on Angolan-Democratic Republic of Congo talks in Cabinda. This should have been Angolan-Congo (Brazzaville) talks.

* Angola has reportedly asked Botswana, Namibia and South Africa to restrict flights into UNITA-held territory, according to an unnamed Western diplomat quoted by Reuters yesterday. International concern is mounting that Angola is on the brink of slipping into another round of civil war. UNITA has until 15 August to answer a number of key UN Security Council demands over its demilitarization and return of territory to central government administration. A response by UNITA Sunday was rejected as "unacceptable" by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative

and the three observer states to the peace process.

* The Sudanese government would welcome a mediation effort by neighbouring DRC in its long-running civil war with the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), AFP quoted press reports today as saying. Haider Haj Siddek, Sudan's ambassador-designate to Kinshasa said Khartoum "will keep the door open to this and all other peace efforts." The statement follows a mediation offer made last month by DRC Agriculture Minister Paul Bondoma on a trip to Sudan.

Nairobi, 6 August 1997, 14:40 gmt [ENDS]

[Via the UN DHA Integrated Regional Information Network. The material contained in this communication may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. UN DHA IRIN Tel: +254 2 622123 Fax: +254 2 622129 e-mail: irin@dha.unon.org for more information. If you re-print, copy, archive or re-post this item, please retain this credit and disclaimer. Quotations or extracts from this report should include attribution to the original sources mentioned, not simply "DHA".]

----- From: UN DHA IRIN - Great Lakes <irin@dha.unon.org> To: irinlist@dha.unon.org Message-ID: <Pine.LNX.3.91.970806173004.3676A@dha.unon.org>

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Great Lakes: IRIN Update 232, 8/20/97

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 232 on the Great Lakes (Wednesday 20 August 1997)

* A leader of one of the suspected gangs terrorising the Indian Ocean city of Mombasa was killed in a gunbattle with Kenyan police Monday night, the 'Daily Nation' reported today. The slain man was identified as Husseini Ali Makuti, a close ally of Emmanuel Maitha, a local leader of the ruling KANU party who was arrested Monday over his alleged involvement in the week-long violence on the coast that has claimed 37 lives. Another KANU activist, Omar Masumbuko, was detained Tuesday night. Opposition party leaders were due to meet the police command in the city today to demand the arrest of a nominated KANU MP, Rashid Sajjad, whom they accuse of bankrolling the disturbances, AFP said. Sajjad has denied the allegation. The 'Daily Nation' reported that 30 ex-servicemen are among the 189 people that have been arrested over the raids which yesterday spread to the tourist destination of Malindi, 120 kms north of Mombasa. The ex-servicemen allegedly took part in the initial 13 August attack on the Likoni suburb of Mombasa which was marked by a degree of organisation and military skill absent from the later incidents.

The opposition and government have traded accusations over who is behind the violence. The Mombasa region voted overwhelmingly for the opposition in the 1992 elections and political tension has risen ahead of elections due before February next year. In the last few days leaflets have been left at the site of attacks telling upcountry migrants - who are perceived to be generally sympathetic to the opposition - to go back home. According to AFP, Kenyans are concerned over history repeating itself. In 1992, some 2,000 people died and 250,000 people were displaced in ethnic clashes in the Rift Valley prior to multi-party polls. International human rights groups accused the government of directing the violence. President Daniel arap Moi yesterday blamed the opposition for manipulating ethnic sentiment on the Coast. However, according to Deputy Provincial Commissioner, Hassan Haji, the events in Mombasa "are not ethnic clashes and there will be no escalation of violence as long as politicians stay out of this thing." He also announced a ban on vigilante groups set up by local residents on the grounds that the security forces had the situation under control, Kenyan TV said yesterday.

* Kenyan constitutional reform talks scheduled to start today under the mediation of a committee of religious leaders have been postponed indefinitely, the 'East African Standard' reported. There have been internal wrangles within the opposition political parties over representation on the umbrella National Convention Executive Council (NCEC) team that would also participate in the talks. Furthermore, a KANU Parliamentary Group meeting yesterday reiterated that the government would not negotiate with the NCEC whose "avowed objective" it said was to "subvert the constitutional order."

* A UN human rights team is due in Kinshasa at the weekend at the start of its mission to probe alleged refugee massacres in DRC. The team is made up of Atsu-Koffi Amega from Togo, Reed Brody from the USA and Andrew Chigovera of Zimbabwe. AFP quoted Amega as saying he had received "multiple expressions of cooperation" from the DRC authorities.

* The DRC authorities yesterday accused France of adopting a "colonial attitude" by rejecting President Kabila's offer to mediate in the Congo-Brazzaville conflict. Information Minister Raphael Ghenda told AFP that Africans were "adult enough" to resolve their own problems. "France has adopted a colonial attitude that demonstrates the archaic nature of relations between France and Africa," he said. According to AFP, France on Monday expressed a preference for the mediation efforts of Gabonese President Omar Bongo.

* UNHCR has reported that the initial result of a registration exercise for refugees in Tanzania's Kigoma region shows an overall reduction of 34 per cent in population figures. As of mid-July, 204,773 people were registered in Kigoma of whom 130,744 are Burundian and 74,029 Congolese compared with an earlier total figure of 311,092. UNHCR attributes the discrepancy to problems with the initial registration process in November last year and spontaneous repatriations. The agency puts the total refugee population in Ngara at 88,195.

* Namibia is prepared to hand over a genocide suspect working in the country on a formal request by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), according to news agency reports. Andre Rwamakuba, Rwanda's education minister during the genocide, is currently employed by Namibia's ministry of health. Namibia has no extradition treaty with Rwanda. Meanwhile, the detention of Hassan Ngeze by the ICTR sitting in Arusha, Tanzania, was extended for a further 30 days yesterday to enable the prosecution to finish its investigations. Ngeze was the former editor-in-chief of the 'Kangura' newspaper.

* At least one person was killed and 16 children abducted in an attack by Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels in northern Uganda on Sunday. The privately-owned 'Crusader' newspaper said the LRA overran an army detachment killing one person and wounding three others before attacking a village at Owolo, 26 kms from Gulu, where the children were abducted. AFP reported that the attack follows the redeployment of soldiers from the north to northwestern West Nile region to stamp out an insurgency by rebels of the Uganda National Rescue Front. According to humanitarian sources there is a general belief that the rebels have been defeated in West Nile. Meanwhile, two people were injured on Monday in a landmine blast in southern Mbarara district at the home of a Rwandan national working with the UN in Rwanda, the 'New Vision' said yesterday.

* WFP reports that the "working caseload" of drought affected persons in Karamoja, eastern Uganda, is 29,925. According to humanitarian sources the Moroto-Mbale road has become insecure and trucks delivering food in parts of Karamoja require armed escorts. Last Friday a private truck was ambushed in the region and two people were killed.

* South African President Nelson Mandela plans to "soon" host direct peace talks between Sudanese leader Omar al-Bashir and John Garang, the head of the main rebel group the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni would also be present, SAPA said yesterday. Meanwhile, according to the umbrella opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the SPLA is "inching closer" to the southern capital of Juba bringing the airport under threat, NDA radio claimed Tuesday.

Nairobi, 20 August 1997, 17:45 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 235 on the Great Lakes (Tuesday 26 August 1997)

BURUNDI

* The Burundian government has again accused former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere of a pro-rebel bias, bringing into question his ability to continue as Burundi peace mediator. "Observers will see that the mediator has already chosen his side and that he is no longer capable," Burundian Foreign Minister Luc Rukingama told the BBC Kirundi service yesterday. Local sources say the intense distrust by the Tutsi establishment towards Nyerere's mediation effort means that, for the Burundian government at least, the Arusha process is effectively over.

Nyerere Monday postponed the all-party peace talks in Arusha, Tanzania, to consult regional leaders, AFP said. But, according to IPS, Nyerere remains adamant over his continued role. "I will not pack my bag. I will continue to mediate ... because that is what I believe is the solution to Burundi's problem," he reportedly said. A spokesman for the rebel National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD) told IPS that the government "is not interested in talks. They think they can win the war on the battlefield." CNDD representatives were present at Arusha. Former Burundi president Sylvestre Ntibantunganya stressed, "those who are using delaying tactics will finally lose the game," AFP reported.

The controversy surrounding the Arusha peace process has widened from an intra-Burundi dispute to one that has embroiled Bujumbura and Dar-es-Salaam in a bellicose exchange of accusations. Burundi claims that Tanzania is sheltering Hutu rebels and Dar-es-Salaam has alleged that President Pierre Buyoya is planning a military strike against refugee camps in the country.

DRC

* South African President Nelson Mandela yesterday defended DRC leader Laurent-Desire Kabila against allegations of ethnic massacres by his forces. "Kabila assured me these allegations were false," Mandela said according to Reuters. "At no time did his own people take part in so-called massacres." Kabila is on an official visit to South Africa.

* Caritas reports there are some 2,000 displaced people in the town of Kalamie, Shaba province, awaiting transport to return to their homes in South Kivu. Outside the town there are an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 who need assistance and their general condition is "poor" according to the Catholic relief agency. Since May, Caritas has returned 6,300 displaced from Kalemie to Uvira, South Kivu.

* While on a visit to DRC last week, former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere called for the reintegration of Banyamulenge within the country. "Why? You have lots of unoccupied land and you don't know what to do with it (but) you refuse to accept your brothers who don't have any," 'La Tempeste des Tropiques' reported him as saying. Meanwhile, DRC civil servants are unhappy with the government's new salary scale and have threatened to strike this week unless their grievances are addressed, the paper said.

TANZANIA

* Distribution has begun of 4,000 metric tons of maize and 205 metric tons of beans to drought-affected persons in Tanzania under WFP's current emergency operation. Thousands of villagers in the affected areas of central and northern Tanzania are reported to be walking long distances in the hope of receiving even a minimal quantity of food. Lacking the purchasing power to acquire the limited amount of produce available in local markets, these populations are now consuming wild fruits or migrating in search of assistance, WFP said. The third and last tranche of WFP relief food was originally intended to assist some 100,000 persons. It is believed that this food will now have to be shared amongst thousands more, WFP reported.

UGANDA

* A Ugandan army commander has appealed for volunteers to negotiate with rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) over the release of 19 Roman Catholic seminarians abducted on 16 August, the state-owned 'New Vision' reported. "I am making an appeal that if there is any way to reach the ADF rebels tell them that the children have nothing to do with their conflict with the government, the government is ready to provide logistics," Col. Katumba Wamala said. Meanwhile, the ADF reportedly ambushed a mini-bus Monday killing one person and wounding four as they travelled between Fort Portal and the western district of Kasese. The army launched a major sweep and picked up 200 people for interrogation on the whereabouts of the rebels, the private Central Broadcasting Service said.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE

* Newly acquired Congolese government Russian-made helicopters attacked positions held by rebel leader Denis Sassou Nguesso in eastern Brazzaville today. It is the first airborne assault by the forces of President Pascal Lissouba since hostilities broke out on 5 June, AFP reported. Peace talks were due to resume today in Libreville on the basis of a new set of proposals by Gabonese President Omar Bongo. Lissouba and Sassou Nguesso had been presented with the plan to study last week. Under the new initiative Lissouba would reportedly remain in power after 31 August, the end of his mandate, while Sassou Nguesso's party would propose a prime minister who would lead a government of national unity. His party would also head the defence ministry. The government radio rejected the formula Saturday because it gave too much power to Sassou Nguesso, AFP said.

Nairobi, 26 August 1997, 16:10 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 242 on the Great Lakes (Friday 5 September 1997)

DRC: UNHCR condemns expulsion of refugees

* Soldiers of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) forcibly expelled some 700 Rwandan and Burundian refugees after surrounding their UNHCR transit centre in Kisangani. In a statement issued in Geneva, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata strongly condemned the expulsion, saying "it shows a wanton disregard for basic rights and represents a blatant breach of international [refugee] treaties." Ogata sent a protest letter to DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila. The refugees were flown to Kigali, AFP reported. Humanitarian sources contacted by IRIN expressed concern that the Kisangani expulsions might be the first of a series of government actions to close down more refugee operations.

Insecurity in Eastern DRC

* An estimated 5,000 people fled to Goma last week as the security situation in Masisi, northwest of Goma town, seriously deterioriated, WFP reported. They are mainly Tutsi who were displaced at Mushaki. There were also reports of heavy fighting in the area. The Congolese Press Agency (ACP) described the situation as "unstable" due to the resurgence of activity by a "few Mai-Mai pockets of resistance". Humanitarian sources said that the picture was "pretty grim". They confirmed the fighting in Masisi and said that the hospital had been "pillaged". The local authorities are alleged to have done little to calm the situation, according to the sources. The displaced people said that most of their belongings were looted. The Ministry of Reconstruction and Emergency Planning officially contacted NGOs and UN agencies in eastern Zaire to stress that displaced people from Masisi urgently needed assistance. The agencies have asked the government to authorise access to the main sites. Goma is reportedly very tense. Shooting was heard last night but no explanation was given.

UN human rights mission condemns "obstacles"

* The UN human rights investigative mission, on Thursday, condemned the DRC government's continuing "obstacles" to its investigation, AFP reported. The Togolese head of mission, Koffi Amega, told AFP that the government had refused to confirm in writing DRC Interior Minister Mwenze Kongolo's verbal undertaking to the UN Secretary-General that the DRC had lifted all objections to the mission. Amega said it was going to be difficult to work under such conditions. He had reported to the Secretary-General and was waiting for his reply. Meanwhile, the mission would remain in Kinshasa.

Zairean human rights body condemns army "urban terrorism"

* A Zairean human rights organisation, AZADO, sent a letter to Kabila condemning the "urban terrorism" by members of the DRC army at Kinshasa's university campus, the Kinshasa newspaper 'Le Phare' reported. It calls for all soldiers to be confined to their barracks, for independent military courts and the creation of a single national army.

BURUNDI: Nyerere to stay as mediator, summit decides

* African leaders at the Dar es Salaam regional summit on the Burundi crisis yesterday (Thursday) agreed that Tanzania's elder statesman Julius Nyerere should continue as mediator in the Burundi conflict. Regional analysts say, however, that other advisers and envoys are likely to play a much greater role in the mediation process, thus reducing his profile. The summit also decided to maintain sanctions against Burundi. A new secretariat would be set up to monitor sanctions compliance. The summit called on the government of Burundi to halt the current trials of the alleged 1993 coup plotters and to unconditionally release opposition leaders so that they could travel freely and participate in the all-party talks. It also called for the immediate disbanding of the regroupment camps. The heads of state urged Bujumbura to send representatives to the next round of all-party peace talks to be held in Arusha, Tanzania, and warned that it would adopt additional measures to deal with any attempt to obstruct the talks. Burundi's government had pulled out of the talks which were to have opened on 25 August.

CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE): Fresh fighting in Congolese capital

* Heavy artillery fire broke out in the Congolese capital, Brazzaville, today (Friday) between forces loyal to President Pascal Lissouba and his predecessor, Denis Sassou Nguesso, AFP reported. The fighting had died down for much of Thursday as Gabonese President Omar Bongo continued efforts to mediate a transitional agreement leading up to presidential elections in Congo. Sassou Nguesso's supporters claim that the current proposals reinforce Lissouba's powers. They have also demanded the post of prime minister in any transitional government. Meanwhile, Lissouba went to France on Thursday for a private visit following his talks with Bongo in Libreville.

National Assembly slams "foreign interference"

* Congo's national assembly, on Thursday, denounced interference by the French oil company Elf-Aquitaine and "great powers and neighbouring countries" in the Congo's political crisis, according to AFP. Speaking on official radio, Assembly spokesman Saturnin Okabe criticised "past, present and future foreign interference" but did not specify to which foreign country he was referring. The national assembly meeting was not attended by deputies from Denis Sassou Nguesso's United Democratic Forces, FDU. The national assembly meeting denounced "the silence of the Congolese political class, the international community of African countries", AFP added.

SUDAN: Government says military situation "stable"

* The official Sudanese armed forces spokesman, General Muhammad al-Sanusi Ahmad, told the Sudanese news agency that the military situation on all fronts was stable despite "limited clashes" in Equatoria, Bahr al-Ghazal, Upper Nile and South Kordofan. Commenting on reports that Eritrean forces are massing, he warned that any attack would be decisively foiled by the armed forces. On his return to Khartoum on Wednesday, President Omar al-Bashir said that he expected a "break-through" in relations with Uganda soon, the Sudanese news agency reported.

UN rights official in Khartoum

* Visiting UN human rights rapporteur Gaspar Biro met government officials and former rebels in south Sudan to assess the human rights situation in Sudan, AFP reported. Biro met State Foreign Minister Gabriel Rorec and Arok Thon Arok of the United Democratic Salvation Front grouping of the south Sudanese factions that concluded a peace accord with the government in April. Arok was quoted as telling Biro in a separate meeting that the war had to be halted and normal life resumed before there could be talk of respect for human rights.

AFRICA: UN Security Council to hold meeting on Africa

The Security Council is to hold a ministerial-level meeting on Africa on 25 September, council president Bill Richardson said. He said September should be the month of Africa in the Security Council. The aim was to focus international attention on conflict resolution in Africa and development.

Nairobi, 5 Sep 97, 15:25 GMT [ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 243 on the Great Lakes (Monday 8 September 1997) [also covering Saturday 6 & Sunday 7 Sep 97]

[Please note IRIN will hold an information exchange meeting this Wednesday at 9am. All members of the humanitarian community are welcome.]

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONG0: * Ex-Zairean leader Mobutu dies in exile

After over three decades in power, ex-Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko died in exile from prostate cancer last night (Sunday). Local sources in Kinshasa described the city as "somewhat sad and confused" as news of Mobutu's death filtered through. Mobutu fled to Rabat, Morocco, in May after being ousted from power by forces loyal to current DRC leader Laurent-Desire Kabila, but spent most of his time there in hospital as his health failed. He was 66 when he died. Reporting his death this morning, Bunia radio described him as a "bloodthirsty dictator". It quoted Information Minister Raphael Ghenda as saying the former leader would be buried in DRC, complying with a request by Mobutu's family for the remains to be brought home. DRC newspapers last week spoke of the imminent death of the former Zairean leader, with one publication observing that Mobutu was in a coma.

* UNHCR "disgusted" over refugee expulsion

UNHCR expressed "disgust" over last week's expulsion of Burundian and Rwandan refugees from Kisangani in eastern DRC and said it was reviewing the basis for its operations in the country. A spokesman pointed out that the needs of people requiring help would have to be balanced against the latest developments in Kisangani. In a brief report on Thursday night, DRC television said Commander Masasu Nindaga was in eastern DRC to "supervise the repatriation of Rwandan and Burundian refugees to their respective countries." By Friday, Information Minister Raphael Ghenda had confirmed all the refugees, numbering over 700, had been repatriated from Kisangani. UNHCR said it planned to repatriate 135 Burundian refugees from Kigali today, all volunteers who would return to "safe areas" from where they could be monitored.

* Talks on human rights probe

UN Security Council president Bill Richardson told reporters on Friday, that patience with DRC over the UN human rights investigation was running out. The Council is due to discuss the issue today. On Thursday evening, DRC television said National Reconstruction Minister Etienne Mbaya, Interior Minister Mwenze Kongolo and the UN team were "trying to harmonise viewpoints" before the probe got underway. Mbaya reiterated the government's position, which included calls for neutrality on the part of the UN mission. * Eastern DRC very tense

Meanwhile, tension intensified in eastern DRC with heavy shooting reported overnight (Sunday) in Goma. Humanitarian sources told IRIN the shooting, which continued this morning (Monday), appeared to coincide with the arrival of 10th brigade Congolese troops allegedly to replace Rwandan soldiers in the area. Six people are reported to have been killed since Thursday night. Further south, the town of Bukavu was also described as very tense with rebels reportedly closing in. Sources said soldiers were setting up heavy artillery positions at Tshibanda, about 35 km from Bukavu, on the road to Bunyakiri which is reportedly under rebel control. The Bukavu-Uvira road has become a no-go area, with frequent bandit attacks and regular harassment of aid agencies reported. On Thursday night, the Bukavu airport military commander and his bodyguard were shot dead in a car ambush, although details of the attack are sketchy. Confrontations between Mai-Mai militia and DRC troops are also said to be on the increase.

In a bid to defuse the crisis, local authorities in Bukavu met a Mai-Mai delegation on 30 August, the Agence Congolaise de Presse (ACP) reported. The news agency said the Mai-Mai submitted a list of grievances to the South Kivu governor, which the latter agreed to pass on to a higher authority. According to ACP, the delegation admitted to siding with ex-FAR/Interahamwe at one point in the Kalehe area, but now pledged to renounce all "underground activities". Last week, the DRC daily 'Le Palmares' wrote that "war resumed with a vengeance" in the east of the country. It claimed Mai-Mai militia had launched an offensive against ethnic Rwandans in the Masisi area, sparked by feelings of marginalisation and discontent. During last year's push against the ex-Zairean troops, the Mai-Mai had fought alongside the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL) but tension between the two sides had been steadily increasing.

RWANDA: * Ruhengeri governor urges border security

Increasing violence in eastern DRC prompted the governor of Rwanda's Ruhengeri prefecture to call for tighter security along the common border. According to AFP, governor Boniface Rucaku described the border zone as a "veritable hotbed of insurgency". He said although the Rwandan army controlled Ruhengeri militarily, "that doesn't mean it can prevent all the saboteurs at work. It doesn't take many bullets to create panic in a central city." He added that the instability could persist for a long time.

* Kabila in Kigali

DRC leader Laurent Kabila arrived in Kigali today on a two-day official visit to Rwanda. His trip will include meetings with Defence Minister Paul Kagame on regional security issues. AFP said the two sides will discuss last week's repatriation of refugees by DRC to Rwanda.

BURUNDI: * Government disappointed with summit decisions

The Burundian government expressed disappointment over regional leaders' decision to maintain sanctions on the country. In a statement, reported by Burundi radio, the government said Thursday's summit in Dar es Salaam had refused to take into account concerns expressed by the authorities and other partners in the peace process. The government vowed to restore peace through all-party talks. The authorities had earlier requested a

postponement of talks until 29 September, pointing out they should be held in a "neutral" country such as Ethiopia. However, participants in the Dar es Salaam summit agreed to hold the negotiations in the Tanzanian town of Arusha, although no date was fixed.

* Splits on sanctions reported

Participants in the Dar es Salaam summit were apparently divided over the Burundi embargo, Reuters reported. It quoted a senior African diplomat who attended the talks as saying Kenya (whose president Daniel arap Moi boycotted the meeting), Zambia and Ethiopia were spearheading calls for lifting the sanctions. Another group, made up of Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda, allegedly argued that sanctions should be strengthened and that a secretariat should be created to monitor the embargo.

CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE): * Situation "worsening by the hour"

ICRC said the situation in Congo (Brazzaville) was "worsening by the hour", describing the peace process at a complete stalemate. Humanitarian conditions had been deteriorating over the last three months, with the number of internally displaced people put at well over 100,000. ICRC expressed concern over the "indiscriminate use of more sophisticated weaponry" by the warring sides of President Pascal Lissouba and his rival Denis Sassou Nguesso. Lissouba meanwhile has refused to meet face-to-face with Sassou Nguesso as the latest attempt at peace talks in Libreville, Gabon, appeared to flounder and heavy shelling again pounded the city of Brazzaville. ICRC said it feared the fighting would spread to other parts of the country and was making plans accordingly.

TANZANIA: * Food situation bleak

The current drought in Tanzania has rendered the food situation - especially in central and northwest regions - during the common months as very bleak, according to WFP. The government is expected to make a formal request soon for assistance to some 1.5 million affected people.

SUDAN: * Ugandan troops, SPLA said advancing towards Rukun town

Sudanese newspaper reports yesterday claimed Ugandan troops and south Sudan rebels from the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) were advancing on Rukun, close to the strategic town of Juba. Some 5,000 fighters equipped with mortars, machine guns and armoured vehicles were reportedly closing in on Rukun, according to the daily 'Alwan'.

* Eastern refugee camps "deteriorating"

A Sudanese official meanwhile warned that conditions in refugee camps in eastern Sudan were deteriorating as people continued to pour in mostly from neighbouring Uganda and DRC. According to AFP, acting Refugee Commissioner Mohamed Ahmed Hussein Abdul Aleim said medical and health services in the camps had "drastically deteriorated for lack of funds". The flow of refugees into Sudan, he added, was "increasing continuously".

Nairobi, 8 September 1997, 15:00 gmt

[ENDS]

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DRC: IRIN background brief on Kivu, 9/10/97

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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: IRIN BACKGROUND BRIEF ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN KIVU - 10 September 1997

Mai Mai warriors, backed by soldiers from the defeated Rwandan and former Zairean armies, are reported to be playing a central role in a fresh outbreak of insecurity in the Masisi region in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire). Meanwhile, a second group of fighters, with vaguer origins and believed to be operating independently, has emerged in the Fizi region of South Kivu. The situation is further complicated by reports of growing tensions between units of Rwandan and Congolese troops which have sparked sporadic exchanges of gunfire and unconfirmed reports of deaths. Humanitarian sources say the situation in the region is now confused and chaotic, but overall it appears anti-Tutsi groups, made up of Rwandan, Burundian, and Congolese fighters, are forming loose alliances directed at the Tutsi-dominated forces of President Laurent-Desire Kabila and his Rwandan allies.

Aid workers report both the towns of Goma and Bukavu to be "very tense" with gunfire heard at night and reinforcements of strategic points by government troops. One Bukavu-based aid worker said Bunyakiri, about 80 km north of Bukavu, was occupied by rebels at the end of last week and attacks were also reported in the towns of Sake and Minova. Other reports said the government had moved heavy artillery to Tshibanda, some 35 km from the town on the main Bukavu-Bunyakiri axis.

Mai Mai fighters, sporting necklaces of "gri-gri" (charms) and heavily influenced by witchcraft, earlier this year helped the-then rebel army of Kabila take power, but fell out shortly afterwards as his administration sought to impose the authority of central government in the area. Named after the Swahili word for water (maji) with which they sprinkle themselves before combat believing it brings immortality, their reemergence coincides with the creation last month of a new rebel group 'Alliance pour la Resistance Democratique' (Democratic Resistance Alliance - DRA) with the stated aim of 'liberating' eastern DRC. Local sources say the new movement is made up largely of Bembe peoples and one of its leaders is Celestin Anzaluni Bembe, a politician from the Fizi region who held the post of 'first vice-president' in Mobutu's last government and is allegedly well-known for his anti-Tutsi sentiments. The movement, reportedly based in Tanzania, groups opposition forces from the DRC, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, according to the DRC newspaper 'La Reference Plus'. Another leader is reportedly Leonard Nyangoma, head of Burundi's rebel Conseil national pour la defense de la democratie (CNDD), dedicated to the overthrow of the Tutsi-led government in Bujumbura. Africa Confidential also recently reported that another Bembe-dominated opposition group -- the Conseil de resistance et de liberation du Kivu -- was recently set up in Kigoma. In Fizi, the rebels are thought to be local people in alliance with Burundian Hutus from the CNDD's armed wing, the Front pour la defense de la democratie (FDD), supplemented by some former soldiers from Rwanda's defeated Hutu-run army, the Forces Armees Rwandaises (FAR), and their hardline allies from the Interahamwe militia. A few stragglers from the defeated Forces Armees Zairoises (FAZ) of former Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko could also be involved. One leader of the Fizi group, and reputed to be a founding member of the DRA, has taken the name of Simba and is known as Charles Simba.

Regional experts say many local rebel groups, resentful at the dominance of the Banyarwanda Tutsis within Kabila's army, could use the name 'Simba' and have little or no contact with each other. 'Simba' -- meaning 'lion' and implying strength -- has been employed by several rebel groups over the years in former Zaire and was the name of 1960s rebellion, in which Kabila played a leading role and which held Kisangani for a short while before central government reimposed its writ.

Regional sources say there is currently no evidence the groups in Fizi and Masisi are coordinating their attacks. Both areas are in fact now home to several distinct rebel movements which may occasionally clash as well as fight alongside each other. Consequently, they say it is not possible at the moment to gauge whether the current unrest poses a serious threat to the new government. Much of the region is now a no-go area for UN personnel. UN staff in Goma are not allowed to move outside the town. In Goma, a UN curfew is also in operation from 23.00 hours to five am local time. No curfew is in place in Bukavu, but over the weekend NGOs reported several attacks on vehicles using the main Bukavu-Uvira link road. The sources also report the military commander of Bukavu airport and his bodyguard were killed in an attack lasting several hours on the night of September 4-5. It was not clear who was responsible for the attack. Local sources say forces from the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) currently hold the airport. Increasing tensions between Congolese troops and RPA soldiers, who supported Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL) takeover of the country, have also been cited as one of the causes of growing insecurity in the area. The shooting in Goma appeared to coincide with the arrival of 10th brigade Congolese troops allegedly to replace Rwandan soldiers.

Under the headline, "War resumed with a vengeance in the East", the DRC daily 'Le Palmares' newspaper also reported the Mai Mai -- made up of Hunde, Tembo, Nande and Nyanga local 'autochtone' tribes with a long history of conflict with the Tutsi and Hutu people -- had launched an offensive against "Rwandan populations" in the Masisi area. Regional analysts say Congolese Tutsi support for both the AFDL and RPA has increased the suspicion of the 'autochtones' (original peoples of the region) within the Mai Mai towards the Congolese people of Rwandan origin. The paper reported another cause of their anger against the government as being the recent assassination of one of their leaders, Major Kara Mbengi, in Kololo camp in Kinshasa. The Congolese Press Agency (ACP) reported a delegation led by North Kivu provincial governor Leonard Kanyamuhunga Gafundi visited Masisi last week and called for calm and peaceful coexistence in the area.

The agency blamed the current "unstable" situation on a "few Mai Mai pockets of resistance". The agency also said the South Kivu governor had met a Mai Mai delegation in Bukavu on August 30 and a list of their grievances had been passed on to the provincial authorities. The agency said the Mai Mai delegation admitted to siding with Hutus from Rwanda's ex-army and militias in the Kalehe area, but had pledged to renounce all "underground activities".

Masisi has for several years been a hotbed of conflict between the Banyarwanda, who comprise both Hutus and Tutsis, and the 'autochtones' -- most of whom are from the Hunde ethnic group although Tengo and Yanga are also present. Between March and July 1993, serious fighting took place and some 14,000 Banyarwanda were killed while several thousand others fled to Rwanda. After the 1994 Rwandan genocide the local tribes -- infected by the propaganda of escaping Rwandan Hutu killers -- tended to target their attacks more on Banyarwanda Tutsis, prompting further

exoduses. Indeed, another explanation for some of the current unrest has been the return of expelled Masisi Tutsis who -- helped by fellow Tutsi soldiers in the RPA -- have returned to reclaim their properties.

The conflicts in Masisi also played an important role in sparking the rebellion by South Kivu Tutsis which ultimately ousted Mobutu from power. In 1996, these Zairean Tutsis, known as the Banyamulenge, came under attack from both the Zairean army and local people. The Banyamulenge, keenly aware of the fate of their Masisi kinsmen, were well-prepared. They fought back and helped by their Rwandan army allies quickly secured control of the region. Forming alliances with other anti-Mobutu groups, including the Mai Mai, they swept through the country and installed Kabila in power in May 1997.

On Monday, Kabila warned he would not tolerate the reorganisation of anti-government forces. A report from the Rwanda News Agency, monitored by the BBC, quoted him as saying he would quickly take action to crush "islets of harmful forces which spilled blood in Rwanda (and) in our country (and) which are reorganising".

Nairobi, 10 September 1997

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 247 on the Great Lakes (Friday 12 September 97)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Annan denies UN "soft" on Kabila

Secretary-General Kofi Annan denied yesterday (Thursday) the UN had been "soft" with DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila, but admitted attempts to investigate alleged human rights abuses in the country had not been "smooth sailing". He told a New York press conference the government's seriousness was being tested, adding that the UN was "determined to get to the facts". Annan said he had warned Kabila that without personal guarantees from the DRC leader that the team could begin work, it would be withdrawn and the Security Council and the world would decide what had to be done. However, Kabila had written to him telling him the mission could proceed, Annan said. "If it gets to a situation where it is impossible for us to do our work, then, of course, we have to draw the right conclusions," he added. After a series of delays and setbacks, the UN mission had hoped to leave for the field tomorrow (Saturday), only to announce last night that the departure had again been put back. AFP quoted a spokesman for the mission, Jose Diaz, as saying the government had reiterated its conditions at a meeting held in Kinshasa yesterday.

Annan also urged a strategy for regional peace in Central Africa, rather than approaching the problem on a country-by-country basis. "We are dealing with new regimes which are to some extent fragile and not that well-established," he said, acknowledging that the "record and pattern" in the region was "disturbing". On DRC in particular, he called for "patience with a regime that is trying to take over in a country that has more or less collapsed". Asked about the future of UN peacekeeping operations, particularly with regard to Rwanda, Annan replied that lessons had been learnt. He conceded that "in some of the situations", peacekeepers had not performed adequately.

DRC, Rwanda reportedly pledge cooperation with UNHCR

Meanwhile, Radio France Internationale reported the DRC and Rwandan ambassadors to the UN said their countries had agreed to cooperate with UNHCR over the issue of Rwandan refugees. It quoted Security Council president Bill Richardson as saying he had been given personal guarantees to this effect by the two men. However, the situation remains unclear as Kabila yesterday welcomed UNHCR's decision to suspend operations in his country.

Repatriations continue from eastern DRC

UNHCR's decision, although not yet implemented, has provoked concern among local residents in Bukavu. They fear the pull-out will entail loss of jobs and damage the local economy. Rehabilitation projects will also be put on hold. Humanitarian sources report that after the forced expulsion of refugees from Kisangani, Rwandan and Burundian refugees in the Shabunda, Lilungu and Katshungu areas are now volunteering for repatriation. Today (Friday), 253 Burundians will be repatriated from Lilungu and a further 53 from Bukavu. It is hoped all repatriations will be completed before the rainy season this month which renders airstrips unusable.

Masisi main topic of discussion between DRC, Rwanda, paper says

'Le Potentiel' daily said the main goal of Kabila's visit to Rwanda earlier this week was to discuss the volatile situation in Masisi. According to the newspaper, Kigali felt threatened by ex-FAR and Interahamwe elements who are regrouping in Masisi and launching cross-border attacks on Rwanda. The article added that Mai-Mai militia activities were internal aimed, not at destabilising Rwanda, but at protecting their lands from "Tutsi occupation".

Kabila rules out national funeral for Mobutu

Kabila stated there would be no national funeral for ex-Zairean leader Mobutu Sese Seko who died at the weekend, 'Le Palmares' reported. Another daily, 'La Tempete des Tropiques' wrote that Mobutu would be "temporarily buried" in Rabat, Morocco, before being transferred to his home in Gbadolite. His wife planned to settle in the USA. The newspaper said it was now up to the Kinshasa authorities to organise the burial in DRC and guarantee the Mobutu family's security.

CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE): Many casualties feared in further raids

Several heads of state are due to meet in Libreville, Gabon, over the weekend in a further bid to try and resolve the civil war in Congo (Brazzaville) between supporters of President Pascal Lissouba and his rival Denis Sassou Nguesso. Pro-Sassou Nguesso news reports said helicopter bombardments by government forces just north of Brazzaville yesterday resulted in many casualties, especially among thousands of displaced people who had sought refuge in the area.

BURUNDI: 29 killed in Bubanza province

Armed gangs carried out an attack in Bubanza province on Wednesday night, killing 29 people and injuring 25 others, Burundi radio reported. The injured were suffering from hoe, club and bullet wounds. The incident forced people to flee to Bubanza town, already crowded with some 20,000 displaced people escaping attacks which the radio said were carried out by the rebel PALIPEHUTU (Parti pour la liberation du peuple hutu) group.

IDP camps closed near Bujumbura

Two displaced people's camps near Bujumbura have been closed down for security reasons, the armed forces announced, according to AFP. The

camps, sheltering thousands of displaced Hutus, were believed to hide hardline elements suspected of carrying out murders and armed robberies around Bujumbura in recent months. The camps were set up in 1994 after army soldiers combed Bujumbura's predominantly Hutu Kamenge district to flush out rebels.

Buyoya due in Kampala

President Pierre Buyoya is due in Kampala today at the invitation of his Ugandan counterpart Yoweri Museveni, Burundi radio reported. The Ugandan 'New Vision' recalled that Museveni had been tasked by last week's Dar es Salaam summit to convey the meeting's decisions to Buyoya.

TANZANIA: Premier appeals for food aid

Prime Minister Frederick Sumaye officially anounced his country was suffering from famine and appealed to the international community for food aid. Tanzanian radio quoted him as saying yesterday that 900,000 MTs of food were required to overcome the famine due to the effects of drought and environmental degradation. The premier said crisis committees had been set up throughout the country to oversee food rationing and prevent misuses.

UGANDA: 21 killed in rebel attack

A dawn attack launched by Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels on a displaced people's camp yesterday left 21 civilians dead, the state-owned 'New Vision' reported today. The incident occurred in Nyahuka, 15km from the western town of Bundibugyo. The article said heavy fighting ensued as the army "responded quickly, repulsing the rebels". Eight rebels were killed, according to the armed forces, who added that the ADF attack was launched from neighbouring DRC.

Many feared dead in army shelling

The privately-owned 'Monitor' today wrote many people were feared dead or injured in army shelling of rebel positions in the northern Aswa and Omoro areas three days ago. Local residents said shells landed "indiscriminately" during all-night shelling on Tuesday.

KENYA: Renewed clashes in Mombasa

Renewed clashes broke out in the Mombasa area yesterday, in which two people were killed and several injured. Kenyan radio said security officers tried to repel raiders who overran Diani police station, south of the city. The raiders then reportedly went on to torch several houses in neighbouring villages. According to the radio, the two who died were part of the gang which was armed. Two guns were reportedly recovered. Kenya News Agency said the attackers are believed to be hiding out in nearby caves. The Kenyan opposition and government have traded accusations of responsibility for the violence, which so far has claimed over 50 lives since it erupted last month.

Nairobi, 12 September 1997, 15:00 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 248 on the Great Lakes (Saturday-Monday, 13-15 September 97) DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: UN investigative team gives ultimatum

The UN team investigating the alleged massacre of refugees in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has given the government of President Laurent-Desire Kabila an ultimatum to allow it to begin work on Wednesday, the mission said today (Monday). The team told Kabila's government that it had two days in which to authorise UN human rights investigators to start their enquiry, AFP reported.

Goma "confused"

French radio RFI today reported the security situation around the eastern DRC town of Goma as confused. According to an interview with a humanitarian agency official, people in military uniforms had been looting in the town and were chased by local security forces. The melange of rival forces in the area made clear identification difficult, he said.

Twenty-two die in plane crash

Twenty passengers and two crew died when a plane chartered by Feed the Hungry International (FHI) crashed as it attempted to land at an airstrip northwest of Fizi in DRC on Friday. The passengers were due to attend a three-day Christian conference. The plane was on its second approach to the runway at Ilundi, near Mulembe town, when it crashed into a hill and burst into flames, an FHI spokesman said. The governor of South Kivu was due to visit the site today.

Official appology for insecurity

The DRC's National Security Council appologised on Saturday for insecurity caused by bogus members of the DRC army, Kinshasa TV reported. The council, meeting in an extraordinary session under the chairmanship of Major Masasu Mindanga, the special security adviser to Kabila, said the security services are not licensed to arrest any citizen without proper legal proceedure.

RWANDA: Official attacks UNHCR

A top Rwandan official on Saturday accused UNHCR of stalling the return of Rwandan refugees from the DRC. "The UNHCR is not interested in solving the (refugee) problem. They still have massive logistics and staff and they need the refugees to maintain them there," Ephraim Kabaija, president of the commission for the repatriation and reintegration of Rwandan refugees, told AFP. Kabaija applauded the forcible repatriation of some 800 Hutu Rwandan and Burundian refugees from a transit camp in Kisangani on 4 September.

Two out of the 460 Rwandans repatriated were reportedly arrested on their return. A further 73 detained for additional screening were eventually released on 9 September by the Rwandan authorities. Of the 218 Burundian refugees flown to Rwanda, 135 volunteered to go home. The remaining Burundians are at Runda, close to Kigali. UNHCR is discussing with the government their transfer to camps in the southern districts of Butare and Gikongoro. "We strongly oppose their forcible repatriation to Burundi," a UNHCR spokesman said.

Death penalty for top politician

Rwanda's appeal court upheld the death penalty on a former top politician, reliable sources told AFP on Saturday. Frodwald Karamira, a Tutsi who became a leading advocate of Hutu extremism, was sentenced to death in January for inciting genocide and of personally organising some of the killings. He is one of the highest-ranking defendants to go on trial in Kigali. He had pleaded not guilty to all charges.

The remains of some 15,000 genocide victims were buried on Sunday in the Rwandan town of Kanzenze, 30 kms south of Kigali. The burial is part of a series of ceremonies aimed at helping Rwandans come to terms with the 1994 killings, AFP reported.

BURUNDI: Museveni urges Buyoya to make peace

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni urged his Burundian counterpart, Pierre Buyoya, to make peace with Hutu rebels and accept the mediation of Tanzanian elder statesman Julius Nyerere, AFP reported on Saturday. Buyoya was in Kampala to be briefed on an East African summit earlier this month in Dar es Salaam. Museveni told Buyoya that the summit was disappointed by the lack of progress in peace talks and that Nyerere had the full confidence of East African countries, AFP said. Buyoya stressed he was keen to open talks with all sides, but insisted on a "neutral" venue other than the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha. The Dar es Salaam summit was convened after the failure of all-party negotiations in Arusha. The Burundi government boycotted the talks accusing Nyerere of bias and Tanzania of not preventing rebel cross-border attacks. Buyoya travelled to the DRC on Sunday to discuss relations between the two countries and the situation in Burundi, Radio Burundi said.

Dismantling of displace/regrouped camps widened

The Burundian government has extended its planned dismantling of displaced and regrouped camps to Muramvya province, northeast of Bujumbura, humanitarian sources report. According to the government's timetable, some 300,000 people are to be resettled from camps in Kayanza and Muramvya provinces by the end of the year.

Three people died and 17 were wounded in a grenade attack today at Gatumba centre in Rural Bujumbura, the Burundian press agency reported.

The Gatumba centre is a transit centre for returnees, notably those who have arrived from the DRC.

UGANDA: Kony "fleeing to Kenya"

The state-owned 'New Vision' reported on Monday that Ugandan rebel leader Joseph Kony and 700 Lords Resistance Army (LRA) followers are attempting to flee to Kenya. Quoting a recent LRA defector, the paper said Kony's escape across northern Uganda is being aided by agents of his cousin Alice Lakwena, leader of the LRA's predecessor, the Holy Spirit Movement. Lakwena is a refugee in Kenya. The commander of the army's northern-based 4th division doubted that Kony would reach Kenya before the army killed him.

Death toll in Nyahuka attack rises

The death toll in last week's rebel attack on a displaced persons camp at Nyahuka, western Uganda, has risen to at least 46. The bodies of some 13 Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels were discovered on Friday near the town, 15 kms from the DRC border, the 'New Vision' reported. One soldier, eight rebels (two of whom were stoned to death by an angry crowd) and 24 civilians were originally believed to have died in the attack on Thursday morning, launched by some 50 ADF. The 'New Vision' said 31 civilians had been injured. The camp houses 20,000 displaced people and was guarded by a small Ugandan army detachment. ADF rebels also on Friday attacked Mahororo in neighbouring Kibale District, about 100 kms east of Bundibugyo, killing two people.

CONGO: Mediation resumes

African mediators in the Congo crisis resumed talks in Libreville, Gabon, today amid reports of heavy weekend fighting. Congo President Pascal Lissouba was due to attend the mini-summit later in the day after boycotting Sunday's round of talks. New Congolese Prime Minister Bernard Kolelas and rebel leader Denis Sassou Nguesso are taking part in the summit along with several African heads of state. Lissouba had accused the participants of siding with France, which he claims supports his rival, Sassou Nguesso, AFP said.

TANZANIA: National food emergency declared

Tanzanian President Benjamin Mpaka on Monday declared a national food emergency, banned food exports and appealed to western donors for 916,000 tonnes of food aid. "The period between now and December 1997 is especially critical," he told western ambassadors at State House. Mkapa said the food crisis, "indeed famine", was due to drought that swept much of East Africa late last year, Reuters reported.

Meanwhile, according to AFP, the government has waived import duty and sales tax on maize to encourage traders to import. Mkapa said he expected donors to supply 10 percent of the food shortfall. "However, the bulk of the deficit, put at about 824,000 tonnes, will have to be commercially imported," he warned.

SUDAN: Political prisoners remain - paper

Despite the Sudanese government's reported release of all political prisoners, an independent newspaper on Saturday claimed that 62 dissidents remain in jail. The allegation by the 'el-Sharee el-Sayasi' paper was denied by the government.

Nairobi, 15 September 1997, 15:10 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 251 on the Great Lakes (Thursday, 18 September 97)

UGANDA: UNICEF campaigns against LRA child abductions

In a coordinated campaign backed by UNICEF, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch-Africa today (Thursday) released reports condemning the kidnapping and murder of children by the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The human rights groups charge that 8,000 to 10,000 children have been abducted in the past two years. The children, some as young as 11-years-old, are subjected to a regime of extreme and arbitrary violence. Their deliberate brutalisation has involved forced participation in the killing of other children. Girls are allocated to LRA commanders as sex slaves. Those caught attempting to escape have been tortured and beaten to death. The LRA is provided with base camps in southern Sudan by the Khartoum government. In return, the LRA is used to battle the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and to destabalise neighbouring Uganda, the reports allege. The abducted children, after rudimentary military training, are compelled to fight. Some 3,000 to 5,000 children are believed to remain in rebel captivity and form the backbone of the LRA.

UNICEF's Executive Director Carol Bellamy said in a statement today, "the evidence of these unspeakable acts is overwhelming." Bellamy called on the Sudanese government to immediately denounce the LRA. UNICEF supports the demand by the two rights groups that the UN Special Rapporteur on Children in Situations of Armed Conflict investigate abuses by the LRA. "There is never just cause for the death or torture of a child," Bellamy said. "Just as there are calls for an investigation into the alleged human rights violations in the Great Lakes region, so the international community must exercise the same conscience towards the children in Uganda."

Khartoum cuts ties with Kony, press claims

The Ugandan press has alleged that LRA leader Joseph Kony has fallen out with Khartoum, the Kenyan 'Daily Nation' reported today. Military sources in northern Uganda claimed last month that Sudan had cut supplies to LRA base camps, forcing Kony and some 300 rebels into Uganda. Their arrival sparked a series of clashes with the army in Kitgum district. Some 50 child soldiers were reportedly rescued after one battle. On Monday, quoting a captured LRA intelligence officer, the state-owned 'New Vision' said that Kony and his followers were attempting to escape into Kenya. Since March, 800 rebels have surrendered to the army, the private 'Monitor' reported on Wednesday.

Border security tightened

The 'New Vision' said on Tuesday that the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) had deployed troops along the Ugandan and Burundi borders. The newspaper noted it was not clear whether the deployment was to suppress ethnic clashes in eastern DRC or to contain the Ugandan rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) operating out of the region. Meanwhile, the Ugandan army claimed to have killed an estimated 20 ADF rebels in a weekend ambush in the western district of Bundibugyo. The rebels were believed to have been part of a group that attacked a displaced camp at the trading post of Nyahuka, 10 kms from the DRC border, last week.

Meanwhile, a battalion of Ugandan troops trained as peacekeepers by a US special forces team held their passing-out parade yesterday. The 770 soldiers from the 3rd "Suicide" battalion will form part of Washington's so-called African Crisis Response Initiative. Reacting to concerns that the training programme amounted to provocation of Sudan, President Yoweri Museveni said: "we have been fighting Sudan for a long time without the Americans," the 'New Vision' reported.

BURUNDI: Resettlement suspended

The governor of Burundi's northern Kayanza province has suspended the dismantling of regroupment camps and the return of people to their communes, humanitarian sources report. The governor indicated that increased rebel activity, particularly in the Butaganzwa and Rango communes, was responsible for the freeze on the programme. To date, seven camps have been dismantled and some 32,500 people returned to their homes out of a total regrouped population in the province of almost 90,000. It is believed the process will not restart until the security situation has stabilised.

RWANDA: DRC refugees settle in Mudende camp

The pace of refugees crossing the DRC border from Goma to Rwanda has slowed. According to UNHCR, 3,408 Tutsi Congolese fleeing violence in Masisi entered Rwanda between Saturday and yesterday. They are believed to have come from two sites in Goma where ICRC had registered some 4,000 internally displaced people. The refugees are settling in Mudende camp, in northern Rwanda, which last month was attacked by Hutu rebels in a raid that killed more than 130 people. The camp now holds some 11,000 refugees. Meanwhile, some 100 soldiers were arrested in Goma between 14-15 September under a new campaign by the national army to improve security in the area, local radio reported.

TANZANIA: Hungry leave their farms

Hungry farmers are abandoning their villages in parts of rural Tanzania in the search for food, a spokesman for the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) told IRIN. Some are hiring out their labour to "relatively rich peasants but even they don't have much to offer," the spokesman said. Drought has wiped out an estimated 30 percent of Tanzania's expected 1996-97 cereal production. In localised cases, the situation is far worse. In Dodoma in the central region, some households have only been able to harvest little more than a bag of sorghum to last a family until the next season. "In the rural areas people have resorted to eating wild fruits," the spokesman said. "We know of cases of people dying from eating the wrong wild fruits."

Livestock prices have crashed as farmers sell off their animals. A cow which previously fetched US $100, is now exchanged for a bag of maize -

which currently costs between US $20-40. In a normal season the price of maize is around US $10. The government has responded to the crisis by waiving import duties on food imports. According to CCT, the local implementing partners of the NGO consortium Action by Churches Together (ACT), poverty will hamper access to food for the increasing numbers of vulnerable people. There is also concern over the inadequacy of Tanzania's transport infrastructure to reach some of the country's more remote regions.

Although this season's "short rains" (September-January) have begun in some areas, "tropical rains are very unpredictable" the CCT spokesman said. He feared a repeat of last year which only achieved 25 percent of average rainfall.

CONGO: Fighting continues

Congo's warring factions, ignoring a ceasefire appeal by African regional leaders, pounded each other's positions with artillery on Wednesday for the third consecutive day, AFP reported. The rival forces of President Pascal Lissouba and Denis Sassou Nguesso are also believed to have brought reinforcements into the battered capital of Brazzaville. A joint communique issued on Monday from a summit of seven African heads of state in Libreville, Gabon, called on both sides to commit themselves to a definitive ceasefire in the three-month conflict. But neither man signed an accord and Lissouba refused to attend the two-day meeting.

Nairobi, 18 September 1997. 15:00 gmt [ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 252 on the Great Lakes (Friday, 19 September 97)

BURUNDI: UPRONA leader arrested

Burundi President Pierre Buyoya told Reuters today (Friday) that he was ready to negotiate with Hutu rebel leader Leonard Nyangoma's Conseil National pour la Defence de la democratie (CNDD). "Our wish is to talk to everybody, every group including Nyangoma's," he said. His comments follow the arrest yesterday of the head of the mainly Tutsi party Union pour le Progress National (UPRONA), Charles Mukasi, as he held a press conference condemning the negotiations policy. The government said Mukasi was detained because he flouted a ban on the briefing, news agencies reported. Mukasi was released later on Thursday.

A serious split has opened in UPRONA, formerly Burundi's sole party. One wing is in Buyoya's government and favours negotiations with the rebels in principle, while Mukasi's faction is hostile to any talks with those seen as "genocidal killers" opposed to any power-sharing with Tutsis, AFP said. The government has agreed to participate in all-party peace negotiations to be held in Arusha, Tanzania, under the mediation of Tanzanian elder statesman Julius Nyerere. A date has not yet been fixed. On Monday, Mukasi said he had begun legal action to block dialogue with CNDD.

Buyoya had boycotted talks in Arusha last month in protest over Nyerere's alleged bias and Tanzania's alleged support for Hutu rebels. A local source said Buyoya, under intense regional pressure to resume the peace process, would use the talks as a forum to present the government's case against Nyerere and Tanzania, "and to buy time". According to AFP, Tanzanian President Benjamin Mpaka said yesterday that Buyoya is "not confident of his position. That is why he has been making unsubstantiated accusations."

Displaced flee to Bubanza

Insecurity continues to plague Burundi's northern Bubanza province, humanitarian sources report. The widespread use of land mines has made "access to many areas impossible." Nevertheless, people from northwestern Cibitoke, displaced by fighting between rival Hutu rebel groups Phalipehutu and CNDD continue to spill into the province. More than 30,000 displaced have gathered in and around the town of Bubanza. Kayanza province to the east is also receiving a stream of people escaping the violence.

Meanwhile, although the governor of Kayanza has suspended the return of regrouped people because of security concerns, the process is still going ahead in Maramvya province, northeast of Bujumbura.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: "Slight progress" over UN probe

UN Security Council President Bill Richards said on Thursday there was "slight progress" over starting up the UN mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) but there was "no satisfactory outcome yet." Reuters reported that Richards had talked to President Laurent-Desire Kabila over the government's stalling of the probe into alleged massacres in the DRC. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan also talked to Kabila on Thursday, Reuters said. "There was agreement to end inflammatory statements on the issue," Richardson noted. In Brussels, AFP reported DRC Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha as once again saying the probe team would have free access to all the country's territory, but only if it "respected certain conditions". No details of the conditions were given.

Mai-Mai plan Bukavu strike

Mai-Mai rebels are threatening Bukavu airport in the DRC's South Kivu province, 'La Tempete des Tropiques' reported on Wednesday. After capturing the town of Bunyakiri to the northwest, the rebels intend to strike through the Kahuzi Biega national park, the paper said. Their progress south has continued despite the arrival of national army reinforcements backed by Rwandan troops, sources who recently flew out of Bukavu told IRIN. Meanwhile, Rwandan army helicopter gunships are in operation in Masisi, according to refugee sources. On Thursday, the DRC government admitted a large battle took place last month between Mai-Mai fighters, supported by Interahamwe Hutus, in Masisi, but denied earlier reports that several hundred people were killed. AFP reported North Kivu Governor Leonard Gafundi as saying the government was in control of the situation.

Kinshasa newspapers responded to a "day without newspapers" appeal by a press freedom NGO and did not publish on Thursday. The NGO 'Medias Libre; Medias pour Tous' called the protest over the arrest of 'Le Phare' editor, Polydor Muboyayi Mubanga. The paper had published an article alleging that President Laurent-Desire Kabila was organising a Mobutu-style presidential guard.

UGANDA: Rebel raid on Kasese

Ugandan rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) abducted nine people and looted shops in a raid on a suburb of the western town of Kasese on Wednesday, the private 'Crusader' reported. The 30-strong ADF group did not fire their weapons so as not to alert security forces. According to the army's operations commander for the western region, the rebels had come from Fort Portal to the north in Kibale district. Meanwhile, the army said it had killed 16 ADF rebels in the western district of Bundibugyo.

Kony starving

Rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leader Joseph Kony is starving in his hideout in northern Uganda, the state-owned 'New Vision' claimed on Friday. "His former fighters told us that Kony and his 40 escorts are in acute shortage of food. They are starving, but fear to come out into the open to confront the army," the paper quoted the overall army commander in the north as having said. According to the commander, Kony is looking for a

guide to take him through Kitgum district to Kidepo National Park in the far northeast, en-route to Kenya.

SUDAN: IGAD talks on

The rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) on Thursday said they plan to attend a regional ministerial meeting on Sudan's civil war in Kenya next week, AFP reported. The talks are due to begin on Monday under the aegis of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

TANZANIA: Cholera epidemic

More than 760 people have died in Tanzania from cholera and meningitis in the last eight months, the ministry of health said in a statement on Thursday. AFP reported the statement as saying 748 of the deaths out of 14,661 reported cases in Tanzania's eight regions, were caused by cholera. According to the ministry, the situation was no longer alarming due to containment measures.

Nairobi, 19 September, 1997. 15:00 gmt. [ENDS]

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[IRIN encourages readers to fill in the Questionnaire sent on 12 September. Replies can be sent by e-mail or fax until the end of September.]

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Rwandan reinforcements for Bukavu - radio

Rwandan troops are bolstering the defence of the town of Bukavu in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Radio France Internationale (RFI) claimed on Saturday. The troops are allegedly crossing Lake Kivu at night to reinforce government soldiers threatened by the advance of Mai-Mai militia. According to the radio report, Rwandan forces are stationed on a hill overlooking the town and at the airport. In the past few months, the Mai-Mai have allied themselves with Rwandan and Burundian Hutu rebels and are demanding the departure of Tutsis from the DRC.

Refugees ordered to register

The Kinshasa authorities have partially closed the border with Congo-Brazzaville, RFI reported today (Monday). Only three entry points along the river remain open for refugees, who have been ordered to register with the police. Those found un-registered will be considered "infiltrators", RFI said. Last week WFP airlifted 87 MTs of beans and oil from Luanda to Kinshasa for 28,000 refugees in the Kinshasa area, most of whom are in Kinkole camp. The supplies will also be used for relief deliveries from Kinshasa to Loukolela for some 8,000 Rwandan refugees still there.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: At least 450,000 displaced

WFP was due to begin distributing food today (Monday) to 60,000 "extremely vulnerable" displaced people in Congo's second largest city of Pointe Noire. Most of the displaced have fled from the three-month-long conflict in the capital Brazzaville. More than 19,000 of them are living in abandoned buildings and empty shelters in the port city. WFP believes there are at least 300,000 displaced in the southern provinces which include Pointe Noire. A further 150,000 people are estimated to have escaped to the north but are cut off from humanitarian assistance because of on-going fighting. WFP began an airlift of beans and oil to Pointe Noire from Luanda, Angola on Friday. The supplies supplement cereal stocks already in the city. The one-month's food ration for the displaced is to be distributed by WFP and the national Federation of the Red Cross.

Meanwhile, helicopter gunships attacked the positions of President Pascal Lissouba's rival Denis Sassou Nguesso in Brazzaville on Sunday. Three helicopters were involved in the attack - the sixth airborne raid since August - which provoked an artillery duel between the two sides, AFP reported. Prime Minister Bernard Kolelas said on Saturday the continued fighting, which began in early June, "could lead to the disappearance of Congo".

UGANDA: No to peace talks - government

The Ugandan government has rejected appeals by church leaders to negotiate with rebel chieftain Joseph Kony, the state-owned 'Sunday Vision' reported. "If we are to talk peace, then we don't need to talk to Kony but his masters in Sudan," minister of state for security in the president's office, Muruli Mukasa, said. He accused Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) of killing government emissaries, and stressed the war in the north would be brought to a halt by diplomatic and military means. The multi-denominational church leaders made their peace call after a three-day workshop on national reconciliation last week.

Meanwhile, the 'New Vision' reported on Monday that LRA forces had infiltrated north-western Gulu district from neighbouring Kitgum. However, the paper said, Kony remains trapped in the Aswa River valley which borders both districts. According to the region's military commander quoted by the daily, 70 rebels have been killed since Kony led 300 of his followers into Uganda from Sudan last month.

TANZANIA: Army moves on refugee "bandits"

In a bid to stamp out banditry, more than 3,000 "vagrant refugees" were arrested in a weekend swoop by the Tanzanian army in the northwestern town of Kigoma, radio Tanzania reported. Humanitarian sources said the figure was around 4,600. The radio said the army picked up Burundian, Rwandan and DRC refugees living outside their camps. According to the broadcast, the commander of the army's western brigade said the operation would continue indefinitely and refugees found "guilty of loitering" in Kigoma town "would either be repatriated or taken to refugee camps". Humanitarian sources noted that DRC refugees have been entering the town to board barges to expedite their repatriation.

BURUNDI: Fresh massacre

Some 20 people were killed and at least 30 wounded by armed attackers over the weekend at Gitaza, about 20 kms south of Bujumbura, Radio Burundi reported. The raiders used guns, axes and machetes to kill and loot indiscriminately, the radio said. Six other civilians were killed at Rushubi, also in Bujumbura Rural province. Five people died in an attack on the displaced camp at Gitaza earlier this month in a raid the army blamed on Hutu rebels.

SUDAN: Juba garrison "starving" - SPLA

Uganda's 'Sunday Vision' claimed that Khartoum has amassed 60,000 soldiers for the defence of besieged Juba, southern Sudan's largest town. The paper quoted a Nairobi-based spokesman of the rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) who alleged the government soldiers being flown into the city were "starving" because the SPLA has closed all land routes into Juba. A Nairobi-based Sudanese embassy official contacted by the paper, denied a report this month by the Paris-based 'Indian Ocean Newsletter' that the government is constructing a chemical weapons factory near

Abu Dawm, south of Khartoum. The SPLA spokesman claimed to have photographs of rebel wounded taken after a battle at Yirol in June "which show that chemical bombs were used against us." The government envoy also described as "a lie" a claim by the newsletter that the Sudanese airforce had taken delivery of four Russian-made Sukhoi fighter-bombers from Syria.

Anti-SPLA alliance grows

The Khartoum government reached a peace agreement on Saturday with the rebel SPLA-United faction of Lam Akol, state-owned radio Omdurman reported. The accord was brokered by the government-allied chairman of the Southern States Coordination Council, Riak Machar in Fashoda, Upper Nile. Akol is expected to arrive in Khartoum to seal the agreement. A government minister said Akol's forces would work in coordination with the army "to support the peace process in the south", the radio said. In April, six southern rebel factions led by former SPLA commanders signed peace agreements with the government.

ANGOLA: Savimbi threatens to abandon peace

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative to Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye has warned that a resumption of civil war can longer be ruled out, AFP reported today. "You can never say that a return to war is impossible," he said in a recent interview with foreign journalists, blaming former rebels of the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), for the near breakdown of pacts signed in the Zambian capital Lusaka in November 1994.

Meanwhile, UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi said his movement will abandon the peace process if the UN imposes sanctions, according to an interview with a Portuguese newspaper published at the weekend. UN Security Council restrictions on travel and flight links are scheduled to go into force on 30 September, AFP reported. They were imposed following UNITA's failure to abide by UN demands for demilitarisation, the hand-over of territory to state administration and the transformation of its radio into a non-partisan facility.

GREAT LAKES: Funding "generous but narrow"

Donor expenditure on the humanitarian crisis in the Great Lakes (excluding Rwanda) averages US$ 1.2 million per day, according to DHA figures which track donations to UN agencies and NGOs. DHA's Financial Tracking Unit, which maintains records on the basis of information supplied by donors, reports donations of US$ 260 million for UN activities and US$ 199 million to non-UN humanitarian programmes (including the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and international NGOs) in the region so far this year.

Almost 80 percent of the UN's 1997 Great Lakes Appeal has been funded or pledged by donors. The UN's reviewed Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal (not including Rwanda), issued in July 1997, sought funding of US$ 313 million and as of 15 September, a shortfall of US$ 63.7 million remains. The EC, the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and the US Government together account for nearly half of all contributions to humanitarian relief in the Great Lakes.

WFP and UNHCR have 90 percent or more of their requirements met, but smaller agencies have fared less well: UNICEF (30 percent), UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (22 percent), WHO (14 percent) and FAO (11 percent). UNESCO and UNV have received no contributions at all. DHA's requirements against an original appeal of US$ 4.2 million are US$ 1.8 million. The UN's July appeal had expressed concern at a pattern of "generous but narrow" funding and urged "a far more inclusive approach". Donors who have contributed to IRIN so far in 1997 are: South Africa, ECHO, the Netherlands, Australia, Denmark, Sweden and Belgium.

Nairobi, 22 September 1997, 15:30 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 255 on the Great Lakes (Wednesday 24 September 97)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: EU tells Kabila aid could be lost

The European Union has again reminded the authorities in Kinshasa that they risk losing aid if they do not cooperate with a UN probe into alleged massacres in former Zaire, Reuters reported diplomats as saying on Tuesday. They said an official letter reiterating European policy towards the DRC (former Zaire) was handed to President Laurent-Desire Kabila earlier that day. International concern has mounted over the blocking of the UN investigative mission, which has been unable to leave the capital Kinshasa since it arrived more than three weeks ago. Human rights monitors say Kabila's forces carried out the massacres during the military campaign which ousted former dictator Mobutu Sese Seko from power last May.

Eastern DRC quieter, but tense

Humanitarian sources report eastern DRC - where Mai-Mai militia, allied with ex-FAR and Interahamwe fighters and some local anti-Tutsi tribes, have been battling DRC and Rwandan army units - as being quieter than for several days, but describe the area as extremely tense. The sources say the calm followed a recent "peace conference" between the Bembe and Banyamulenge peoples in south Kivu. One source added that in the Uvira region, where the government has been bolstering the armed forces, Bembe fighters were now being collectively described as "Mai-Mai".

"Le Phare" journalist still detained

The Paris-based organisation, Reporters sans frontieres (RSF), has renewed an appeal for the immediate release of Polydor Muboyayi Mubanga, the editor-in-chief of the Kinshasa daily "Le Phare" who was arrested on 8 September. His arrest triggered widespread criticism of the government. On 12 September, the Congolese human rights organization Association congolaise de defense des droits de l'homme (AZADHO) called for the "immediate" release of the journalist and asked "authorities to abandon their intimidation tactics." Boston Globe accuses army of Hutu killings

The US newspaper the 'Boston Globe' has alleged the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan army has been engaged in a "ruthless counterinsurgency campaign" against rebel Hutus which has led to the death of at least several hundred civilians in recent months. The article says there is no evidence that US military trainers based in Rwanda have participated in the military operation, but says the government campaign has created a problem for the Clinton administration. Mounting concerns about the Rwandan army's human rights record has sparked a bitter dispute in the US government on whether Washington should maintain its close military ties with the Central African nation. Congressional critics, including Representative Christopher Smith, Republican of New Jersey, have called on President Clinton to determine whether US troops are complicit in the killings.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Fresh shellfire reported

Fresh shelling rocked the Congolese capital Brazzaville on Wednesday after a particularly intense overnight barrage, Reuters reported witnesses as saying. The outbreak preceded an anticipated policy statement on Thursday from Prime Minister Bernard Kolelas, who formed a unity government in a bid to end the three-month-old conflict between President Pascal Lissouba and his predecessor Denis Sassou Nguesso. AFP reported there were growing fears, following the virtual collapse of international mediation efforts, that the country was headed towards partition.

KENYA: WHO reports cholera epidemic on border with Tanzania

WHO representatives have announced a cholera epidemic in western Kenya on the border with Tanzania. They say mortality rates are in the region of five percent of those admitted to local hospitals compared with usual mortality rates of around 0.5 percent or lower.

AFRICA: African nations urge debt relief

African nations said on Wednesday they were being marginalised in the world economy, with a dearth of capital flows and trade opportunities hampering their efforts to improve their plight. "Africa's economic performance remains below potential, and inadequate to reverse the trend in poverty," Reuters reported Ethiopian Finance Minister Sufian Ahmed as telling the World Bank/International Monetary Fund annual meetings in Hong Kong. "We are aware of the marginalisation of our continent in the current globalisation of the economy."

Nairobi, 24 September, 15:00 GMT

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 256 on the Great Lakes (Thursday 25 September 97)

BURUNDI: "Building the Future" meeting on

A UNESCO-sponsored all-party conference on 'Building the Future of Burundi' is due to open in Paris tomorrow (Friday). Burundi authorities described the gathering as a brainstorming session, and expressed optimism over the outcome. Burundi's Peace Process Minister Ambroise Niyonsaba said most political parties would be represented. He told the Agence Burundaise de Presse (ABP) on Tuesday that the conference was not a question of holding "negotiations". However, a faction of the main opposition party FRODEBU announced a boycott. Tanzania-based FRODEBU president Jean Minani told BBC Kirundi radio his party had rejected the talks because they were "prepared by (Burundi President) Buyoya". "The talks are not aimed at finding a solution to Burundi's problems, but a solution to Buyoya's problems," he claimed.

Burundi's ambassador to Kenya Stanislas Nakaha said he hoped the conference would encourage more people to participate in the Burundi peace process, not necessarily within the Arusha framework. Regional analysts say the Burundi government is more likely to throw their weight behind such a conference, because it dilutes mediator Julius Nyerere's control over the peace process. The government has accused Nyerere of "bias" in his mediation efforts.

RWANDA: Death becomes a banality - Amnesty

According to Amnesty International (AI), at least 6,000 people - the majority unarmed civilians - "are reported to have been killed in Rwanda between January and August 1997." In a report on Thursday, the rights group said the real death toll is likely to be considerably higher, and returning refugees have been particular targets. AI accused the Rwandan army and Hutu rebels for the killings. "The population of Rwanda is living in a state of fear, knowing that whatever their ethnic origin or their perceived affiliation, they may become targets of arbitrary violence by one side or the other," Amnesty said.

"The international community has allowed death to become a banality in Rwanda once again," the report stressed. It criticised foreign governments for "turning a blind eye to the worsening human rights situation" and advocating the continued repatriation of Rwandan refugees from neighbouring countries.

Court jails 17-year-old

A court in the central Rwandan town of Gitarama has sentenced a 17-year-old boy to three years imprisonment for the murder of four people during the 1994 genocide. Rwandan radio said because Francisco Minani had pleaded guilty and appealed for a pardon, the court reduced his sentence from the six-years sought by the prosecution. Minani, who was aged 14 when he committed the murders, said he was coerced and killed his four nephews to save his own life.

Opposition says army cuts a ruse

The opposition Rally for Democracy and Return of Refugees (RDR) has dismissed Rwandan government plans costed at US$ 39 million to slash the size of the army. "This is a programme meant to provide (Vice President Paul) Kagame with finance to upkeep troops in Zaire, those killing citizens in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri and those he has sent to Burundi," RDR leader Francois Nzabahimana alleged on Wednesday on the BBC Kirundi/Kinyarwanda service.

Troops quit DRC

Rwandan troops have completed their mission and withdrawn from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the defence ministry said on Thursday. They "have all been pulled out, unless we left some there under an agreement with (President Laurent-Desire) Kabila, but I don't know that," a senior advisor to Kagame told AFP. The Rwandan army's primary goal in the DRC was to dismantle refugee camps used as training centres by Hutu rebels, advisor Claude Dusaidi said. In recent weeks there have been reports of Rwandan troops reinforcing the DRC army in the ethnically troubled Masisi region. Dusaidi said Rwandan soldiers could continue to operate in Masisi "if it is necessary and if the Congolese think it is appropriate."

TANZANIA: Refugee crackdown continues

Tanzanian authorities have arrested approximately 1,000 mainly Burundian refugees in the northwestern town of Ngara, humanitarian sources report. They are being screened at the Mbuba transit centre. Meanwhile, a weekend swoop on refugees living outside their camps in Kigoma town has led to the arrest of 4,000, UNHCR said. As of Wednesday, the UN agency had transported 1,000 Burundians east from Kigoma to Kasulu town. Tanzania has accused refugees of being responsible for banditry in the region.

UGANDA: ADF attacks Kasese again

Allied Democratic Forced (ADF) rebels on Wednesday killed at least 12 people in a fresh raid on the western Ugandan town of Kasese. The private 'Monitor' newspaper said the rebels disguised themselves as security forces and forced people to open their doors in the Nyakasanga suburb. The newspaper said an unspecified number of residents were abducted. The incident comes a week after nine people were kidnapped in the same area by the ADF.

ANGOLA: Pessimism over peace

The troika of international observers on Angola are pessimistic over UNITA's commitment to the fragile peace process. "We remain apprehensive," Portugal's Secretary of State for Cooperation Jose Lamego told Portuguese radio Renascenca today. The former rebel movement has until 30 September to comply with the 1994 peace accord or risk UN Security Council sanctions. The international observer nations - Portugal, the US and Russia - believe UNITA has made "little progress", Lamego said. The troika will meet on Friday in New York to consider a report by the UN Secretary-General based on findings by his Special Representative to Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye. Beye met UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi yesterday.

SUDAN: Peace talks questioned

Sudan's exiled former prime minister said a new round of peace talks between the government and the rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) had little chance of success, AFP reported. "Everything indicates that the (Khartoum) regime is not serious in the search for a complete solution," Sadiq al-Mahdi said in a statement issued in Cairo on Wednesday. The government and SPLA agreed to resume talks in Nairobi on 28 October under the aegis of the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Al-Mahdi said the results of the meeting would be evaluated by the opposition National Democratic Alliance - of which he is a key member - which groups the SPLA with the northern opposition.

Nairobi, 25 September, 14:40 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 258 on the Great Lakes (Saturday-Monday, 27-29 September 97)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: US warns Kabila over rights team

A US State Department spokesman warned Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) President Laurent-Desire Kabila that its relationship with Kinshasa "will be determined to some significant extent by his willingness to allow the UN human rights team to do its job." Spokesman Jamie Rubin issued the warning at a news briefing at the UN on Thursday, the US Information Agency reported. DRC state radio from Bukavu said on Saturday that Minister of the Interior Mwenze Kongolo had reiterated that the UN mission would not be allowed to travel to alleged massacre sights in the north of the country. Reuters reported that Kongolo also threatened to expel foreign NGOs "which don't have any useful function." He added that others would have to "renegotiate their stay."

Ex-FAR surrender to army Over 800 armed ex-FAR and Interahamwe surrendered to Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) forces in the east of the country, Information Minister Raphael Ghenda told Kinshasa TV over the weekend. DRC radio reported that 24 soldiers were sentenced to between 10 and 15 years imprisonment with hard labour for "causing panic among the population" in Kinshasa. The soldiers had fired heavy weapons for about two-hours on 20 September to press for the payment of their salaries. Humanitarian sources report that a soldier guarding the health minister's residence opened fire on Friday on a group of students, killing one and wounding two. The soldier was sentenced to death by a military court that was immediately convened.

Interior minister arrested

Former DRC interior minister Celestin Shabani was arrested in Kinshasa over the weekend. His whereabouts however are unknown, the BBC reported on Monday (today). Shabani is a close associate of opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi.

Coup fears

The DRC newspaper 'La Tempete des Tropiques' alleged last week's partial closure of the border with Congo-Brazzaville was due to security concerns. The paper claimed on Thursday that militia of Congolese rebel leader Denis Sassou Nguesso had infiltrated Kinshasa, prompting fears of a potential coup. Members of the former Zairean Special Presidential Division are said to be fighting alongside Sassou Nguesso's 'Cobra' militia.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Conditions not right for peacekeepers

The UN has put off a decision to send an international force to Congo-Brazzaville on the grounds that the conditions for deployment have not been met, AFP reported. "We believe that before there is a commitment of a peacekeeping force, there'll be a political framework and that hasn't happened yet," UN Security Council President Bill Richardson said on Friday. "Extremely heavy gunfire" shook the capital Brazzaville today, leading "experts" to suggest that one of the warring parties had acquired new weapons, the news agency said. The fighting between President Pascal Lissouba and rival Denis Sassou Nguesso which erupted in June has killed at least 4,000 people.

UGANDA: Joint operation planned to clear ADF

Uganda is planning a joint military operation with the DRC to secure the border and wipe out Ugandan rebels operating in the area. Western Uganda operations Commander Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Angina said he was waiting to hold discussions with a representative from the DRC, AFP reported on Saturday. "If Congo does not have the military capacity at present because of its own problems, we will ask for joint operations so we can seal the border and deal with this problem finally," Angina said. The rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) are based in the Rwenzori mountains which straddle the Uganda-DRC border, but also take refuge just inside the DRC. Angina told AFP there were only 63 rebels left in Bundibugyo district, after 250 infiltrated the area in June, and less than 300 operating in neighbouring Kasese district.

ADF - 'alliance of devils'

Ugandan Minister of Health Crispus Kiyonga, described the ADF as "an Alliance of Devils' Forces," the state-owned 'New Vision' reported on Saturday. He denied the rebels were genuine Muslims and said the war "was being sponsored and fanned" by the Sudanese government. He was in Kasese to deliver a condolence message from President Yoweri Museveni over the deaths of 13 people in an ADF attack on Kasese last week. Meanwhile, the Ugandan army claimed to have killed 17 ADF rebels and destroyed one of their hideouts at Mapata in Kasese district on Saturday, the 'New Vision' said today.

Splits in LRA reported

A top official in the exiled political wing of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has been expelled by the rebel group, AFP reported the 'Monitor' newspaper as claiming on Sunday. Alfred Banya, LRA's secretary for political and human rights affairs, said in a letter to the newspaper that his sacking came after he raised concerns about ill-treatment of civilians by the rebels. He had asked for the release of captives including 21 school girls abducted from a Catholic school in Aboke last year. A rebel deserter told AFP last week the Aboke girls are being held in the southern Sudanese capital of Juba, where LRA leader Joseph Kony is alleged to retain his headquarters. Meanwhile, 300 travellers have been stranded for three weeks in Gulu town while the army clears the road leading north to the Sudanese border of LRA-planted mines, the 'Sunday Vision' reported. On 23 September, Kony and his rebel "brigade", known as Control Altar, crossed the road to join other rebel groups in Gulu district's Kilak county, AFP said.

BURUNDI: UNESCO meeting stresses dialogue

Participants at a UNESCO-organised meeting in Paris on 'Building the Future of Burundi' stated the need to end the violence and restore peace in the country through dialogue and negotiations, a UNESCO statement said. The September 26-28 meeting drew some 50 representatives from different sections of Burundian society to begin a dialogue focussing on the themes of the origins and nature of the conflict; education, culture, science and communication at the service of dialogue; and building the future - peace and development, democratic principles and human rights. "Beside the need to end violence and restore peace through dialogue and negotiation, participants stated the need to work together with all social and political partners, to find a comprehensive solution to the problems of injustice and impunity," the statement said. The participants called for the continuation of the dialogue process begun by UNESCO.

RWANDA: Famine threatens - radio

Rwandan radio said on Sunday that famine is looming in the country's southwestern Gikongoro region. According to the radio, the price of food has rocketed and children have been abandoned by families that cannot afford to feed them. The station's correspondent said beggars in the markets outnumber buyers. Meanwhile, a humanitarian agency report last week blamed a lack of agricultural inputs and/or a lack of manpower and water management for a low level of cultivation during the July to August season. Only 60 percent of land usually in production was put under crop.

SUDAN/UGANDA: Beshir/Museveni to meet

Sudanese state-owned radio announced on Sunday that President Omar al-Beshir is to meet his Ugandan counterpart, Yoweri Museveni, in South Africa on 5 October. The talks in Pretoria are part of President Nelson Mandela's peace initiative to mend relations between the two neighbours. Zimbabwean leader and OAU chairman Robert Mugabe is also to attend the summit. Meanwhile, thousands of male school-leavers in Sudan have been sent to combat zones in the south and east of the country, the army said on Saturday, AFP reported. Under a presidential decree issued in June, more than 70,000 young Sudanese unmarried males have to do between 12 and 18 months compulsory military service before they are entitled to apply for a university place.

SPLA warns of "acute" hunger

Sudanese rebel leader John Garang has appealed for international food aid to tackle an "acute food shortage" in the southern region, IPS reported. The Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) chief said in Nairobi on Thursday that the rains had failed this year due to the "El Nino effect". The SPLA's London spokesman, recently on a fact-finding tour to the area, told IPS that "people survive on edible green leaves" while the more fortunate barter trade with Uganda. The spokesman said Khartoum had refused to give aircraft permission to fly into SPLA-controlled towns of Rumbek, Tonj, Yirol and Yei.

ANGOLA: Sanctions means end of peace accord - UNITA

UNITA Secretary-General Lukamba Paulo Gato warned the movement would withdraw from the peace process if the UN Security Council imposes sanctions after 30 September. He told National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) radio on Friday the party was "working day and night" to fulfill UN Security Council demands. If the effort is not taken into consideration, he said, "we will withdraw from the game on 1 October. The international community should be clear about this." He denied this would mean the resumption of conflict as only the government "is in a position to wage war". Meanwhile, Angola's other opposition parties said in a joint statement that dialogue was the only way to resolve the current crisis, Angolan state-owned TV said.

Nairobi, 29 September 1997 16:00 gmt

[Ends]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 259 on the Great Lakes (Tuesday, 30 September 97)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Artillery fire hits Kinshasa again

Artillery fire from the Congo-Brazzaville capital hit Kinshasa again today (Tuesday), AFP reported. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) government threatened retaliation yesterday after 17 people were killed in shelling from across the river. Kabila cut short an official visit to Zambia and returned home today to hold an emergency cabinet meeting. "We have all means of stopping this shelling at the source and, if this provocation continues, all means will be used," DRC Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha announced from New York on Monday. AFP said at least six shells fired from Brazzaville struck Kinshasa today. Congolese TV reported that at least one person died and two were serously wounded. The news agency quoted a source in Kinshasa who claimed "the cannon was aimed right at Kinshasa and not at the forces of Sassou Nguesso, who were in exactly the opposite direction." Exchanges in the bitter battle between rebel leader Denis Sassou Nguesso and President Pascal Lissouba have increased in intensity.

DRC Interior Minister Kongolo Mwenze charged that "the government of Brazzaville has told us that these shells were fired by elements of the former special presidential division (DSP) ... who are fighting alongside the supporters of former Congolese president Denis Sassou Nguesso." A spokesman for Sassou Nguesso's party said "the shelling was ordered by the pseudo-president Pascal Lissouba" as part of a "cynical and Machiavellian" plot to "provoke Kabila's forces to enter the war." He denied that former DSP soldiers were responsible for the artillery fire. Meanwhile, AFP reported that members of the DSP had been taken prisoner by Lissouba's forces. An AFP correspondent said he saw three handcuffed ex-Zairean soldiers, including one former DSP guardsman, arriving in Kinshasa aboard a Congolese government helicopter.

Mai-Mai and Interahamwe surrender

Up to 5,000 Mai-Mai warriors have surrendered in eastern DRC and want to be integrated into the army. Interior Minister Mwenze Kongolo, who recently returned from the region, said on Sunday the Mai-Mai began giving themselves up voluntarily three weeks ago, Reuters reported. "They are tired of life in the bush and they want to join the army," Kongolo said. "The problem is some of them are very young, nine or 10-years-old. We will train those who are old enough and put them in the army." Some 800 Interahamwe Hutu militia and Hutu soldiers of the former Rwandan army have also surrendered, the minister said. "There is a possibility we can take them somewhere far from the frontier (with Rwanda) where they can work in the fields and on the roads," he suggested, adding that Kinshasa was negotiating with the Rwandan government on the issue. Meanwhile, state-run Congolese radio said on Monday that some 70 child soldiers demolilised from the army were handed over to their parents after completing a UN-supported re-education and rehabilitation programme.

Massacres of Mai-Mai denied

The Provincial Security Committee for North Kivu has denied what it called "misinformed" media reports alleging the DRC army recently massacred more than 500 Hutu and Mai-Mai fighters who had joined the army, local radio said on Friday. Humanitarian agencies report that more than 4,000 young recruits had recently arrived at the Kinyogote transit centre near Goma.

Masisi situation stabalised

According to a recent humanitarian report, the security situation in Masisi, eastern DRC, has "significantly stabalised" although remains "volatile." It points to continued ethnic animosity between autochtones and Banyarwanda and the existence of numerous armed groups. The last census on Masisi was carried out before 1994 and indicated that 30 percent of the zone's pre-war population was Bahunde, Batembo, Banyanganga and Banande. The remaining 70 percent, or 610,000 people were Banyarwanda - either Hutu or Tutsi.

The report notes that while Hutus were more or less equally distributed in all districts of Masisi, the majority of Tutsis were concentrated in the eastern Bashali district. Osso district in which Masisi centre falls was particularly affected by the violence. There was large-scale destruction of housing and public facilities and close to 50,000 people were made homeless.

Editor detained, party activist missing

DRC police detained the managing editor of the daily 'Le Palmares', Michael Luya, AFP reported on Monday. Police chief inspector Chalwe Raus said Luya was held "in connection with an enquiry" and would be freed when certain checks are carried out, without giving further details. A leading local human rights group AZADHO on Saturday called for an enquiry into the disappearance of two activists of the radical opposition l'Union democratique pour le progres social (UPDS), Reuters said. They were arrested, along with 13 others, during a peaceful protest on 15 August. The group is also concerned for two party leaders seriously ill in detention. Political activity was banned in May for a two-year period leading up to elections. In a letter to the European Union last week, UPDS leader Etienne Tshisekedi described President Laurent-Desire Kabila as a "dictator" and called for international pressure to force the government into creating a state of law, Reuters reported.

South Africa asked to extradite Mobutu's officials

The DRC government has appealed to the South African authorities to extradite senior officials from the regime of late Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko. News organisations said Kinshasa had identified up to 20 of Mobutu's top generals and senior advisers in South Africa and accused them of living lavishly on money looted from the state treasury. The DRC called for their assets to be frozen. According to one radio report, South Africa's deputy foreign minister has ordered an investigation into how the officials entered the country and what money they brought with them.

* Correction: Please note that in Emergency Update 258, Celestin Shabani was incorrectly referred to as a former DRC interior minister. Shabani instead held the portfolio five-years-ago during the premiership of Etienne Tshisekedi.

TANZANIA: Border skirmish with Burundi

Tanzanian and Burundian troops exchanged fire on their tense Lake Tanganyika border over the weekend, the Tanzanian defence ministry announced today. AFP reported that both sides accused each other of starting the shooting. The authorities in Dar es Salaam said a Burundian vessel with soldiers on board had entered Tanzanian territorial waters and attacked Tanzanian fishermen. They then turned their fire on Tanzanian troops who arrived at the scene. The shooting late on Saturday night lasted into Sunday morning. Burundi's defence ministry retorted that Tanzanian troops had opened fire first and were using the alleged incursion by a patrol boat as an excuse. It said Tanzanian gunners had fired on the lake patrol and Burundi military positions. Tanzania said none of its soldiers were hurt and "the situation is under control." AFP said local military commanders on both sides of the border had met later on Sunday and agreed to prevent the conflict escalating. The incident follows months of rising tensions between the two sides.

RWANDA: UNHCR vehicle ambushed, driver killed

A UNHCR truck operated by the German aid agency GTZ was ambushed in eastern Rwanda on Friday morning killing the driver in the resulting crash. It was returning from dropping returnees from the Runda transit centre near Kigali to Kibuye prefecture. The attack took place in Kibumu commune, Kibuye prefecture. The truck, with UN markings, was stopped at a the first vehicle along the road that morning, UNHCR said, before the usual army patrol had opened the road to civilian traffic. Three people travelling in the back of the truck were injured and taken to hospital.

Demobilisation underway

About 4,800 Rwandan soldiers were demobilised on Monday, BBC Kinyarwanda said. According to the report, Vice President and Defence Minister Paul Kagame told the ex-Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) soldiers that the demobilisation process was "part of the solution to problems facing the country" and asked them to behave themselves in their new civilian life. An unnamed demobilised soldier interviewed by the radio complained about the inadequacy of the 100,000 Rwandan Francs pay-off and said life would be tough. The government earlier this month announced plans to shed 17,500 RPA soldiers and 40,000 combatants of the ex-Rwandan armed forces over several years. The defence vote currently absorbs 34 percent of the budget.

ANGOLA: Government "disappointed" over sanctions delay

The Angolan government is "disappointed" with the UN Security Council's decision to give the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) another 30 days to comply with the Lusaka peace agreement. "We think that this process must be concluded, otherwise we will have a country which will be eternally postponed," a spokesman for the Angolan presidency told Portuguese Renascenca radio. The Security Council voted on Monday to extend the deadline to 30 October for UNITA to demonstrate "concrete and irreversible steps" on compliance before considering travel sanctions. The Security Council noted that although UNITA had made some progress in validating the 1994 peace accord, the process was not yet irreversible, AFP said.

[A recent report by a USAID mission to Uganda on the conflict in the north of the country recommended, among other measures, reconstruction assistance for the region. The package of initiatives would cost an estimated US$ 6.5 million rather than US$ 5 billion as earlier reported.]

Nairobi, 30 September 1997, 16:15 gmt

[Ends]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 260 on the Great Lakes (Wednesday, 1 October 97)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: DRC plans Brazzaville military intervention

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) President Laurent-Desire Kabila said today (Wednesday) he plans to send troops into Congo-Brazzaville to create a security corridor and search for guns that have fired on Kinshasa for three consecutive days, the BBC reported. Kabila said the troops would only be deployed after talks with Brazzaville rebel leader Denis Sassou Nguesso. He described the troops as an "observation detachment" but would not confirm what military equipment they would carry, the BBC said. According to a regional analyst quoted in the report, Kabila is "clearly going to bring in some kind of peacekeeping force" and is attempting to play a "neutral mediator" role in the bitter conflict between Sassou Nguesso and President Pascal Lissouba.

DRC retaliates, artillery fires on Brazzaville

Gunners in Kinshasa opened fire with multiple rocket-launchers on the Congo-Brazzaville capital today AFP reported, but shells fired from Brazzaville again hit the city for the third consecutive day. The barrage by the DRC army was in retaliation for the deaths of 21 people killed in Kinshasa by artillery salvoes on Monday and Tuesday from across the river that separates the two countries. According to humanitarian sources, mortar rounds fired from Brazzaville landed in Kinshasa's city centre today but no casualties were reported. The city is reportedly calm. An independent source in Brazzaville told AFP that at least one shell fired by the DRC army had fallen in the Congolese capital's southern Bacongo district, causing no known casualties. Other shells landed in the river, the source said. UN Security Council President Bill Richardson on Tuesday urged all parties to exercise restraint.

Brazzaville premier blames DSP for Kinshasa shelling

Congo-Brazzaville Premier Bernard Kolelas said there was "convincing proof" that elements loyal to late Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko were responsible for this week's shelling of Kinshasa. Kolelas arrived in the DRC on Tuesday to express his "heartfelt" sympathy for the 21 deaths, Kinshasa TV reported. He said the shelling had come from the northern quarters of Brazzaville under the control of former president Denis Sassou Nguesso. However, a source in Brazzaville quoted by AFP claimed that at least one 122 mm cannon was fired on Kinshasa on Monday from a position held by government forces near the headquarters of the presidency. Humanitarian sources also told IRIN that artillery had been fired at Kinshasa from President Pascal Lissouba's southern stronghold.

Kolelas, interviewed by the TV station, denied reports that along with Sassou Nguesso, Lissouba had also employed former soldiers of the Zairean special presidential division (DSP). He said the ex-DSP had arrived in Brazzaville as refugees, and although Lissouba had wanted them to move on, "they had to stay under terms which we had to sign." Kolelas however acknowledged that Hutu Interahamwe militia and ex-Rwandan government soldiers (FAR) were fighting on both sides of the four-month conflict.

Sassou Nguesso spokesman denies responsibility

A spokesman for Sassou Nguesso's Forces democratiques unies (FDU) today denied government allegations that his party was responsible for the shelling of Kinshasa or had recruited former DSP soldiers. Isidore Mvouba told Radio France Internationale that "Mr Lissouba is assiduously courting (DRC) President Kabila in order to bring his Alliance of Democratic Forces into the Brazzaville conflict."

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Food distribution begins for thousands of displaced

The first large-scale food distribution for thousands of people in Pointe-Noire displaced by the fierce fighting in Brazzaville began today, WFP reported. There are some 14,000 people classified as the most vulnerable in the southern city and will receive a one-month food ration. Distribution teams will proceed to four other major towns in the region to reach a further 60,000 displaced. According to WFP, 250,000 people have fled Brazzaville through Pointe Noire since fighting erupted in the capital. Some 80,000 are believed to have remained in the port city while others have moved into the southern provinces.

RWANDA: Kigali gears up for food shortages

Rwanda's Interior Minister Sheikh Abdul Karim Harerimana met the country's prefects on Tuesday to draw up plans to cope with food shortages emerging in some regions, Rwandan state radio said. The prefects were asked to conduct a census of needy populations; organise a fair food distribution system; create food-for-work programmes; cultivate available marshes and valleys; and make daily reports to the authorities, the radio reported. WFP, while stating there are no signs of famine in Rwanda at the moment, said on Tuesday there "are clearly pockets of problems in Rwanda and many people who are finding it difficult to cope right now."

The country's rainy season is two weeks late and WFP said it was "very concerned by a sharp rise in food prices". Two eastern prefectures - Umutara and Kibungo - have seen a doubling of their populations since the return of 1.3 million refugees to the country at the end of 1996 and the beginning of 1997. The last harvest, although 10 percent better than the previous year's, was unable to compensate for such a large population increase. There are also traditionally food-insecure prefectures such as Gitarama, Gikongoro, Butare and Kigali Rural which have experienced a particularly harsh dry season this year. WFP said it is aware of these problems and has been running programmes throughout the country to assist the most vulnerable members of the population.

SUDAN: US embassy opening postponed

Under pressure from Congress, the US State Department on Tuesday reversed its decision to re-open its embassy in Sudan to allow lawmakers to consider a sanctions bill against Khartoum. AFP reported. "There is still no decision to re-staff our embassy in Khartoum," spokesman James Rubin said. Senators are considering measures to punish Sudan for its poor human rights record and failure to engage in a serious effort to end the civil war, AFP said.

US accused of "acts of aggression"

Sudan's Foreign Minister has accused the United States of "an act of agression" by increasing military aid to hostile neighbours Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda, Reuters reported on Tuesday. Ali Osman Mohammad Taha told the London-based Arabic daily 'al-Hayat' that "increasing military aid falls in the category of increasing conflict in the region, it doesn't help solve anything." Last week US officials announced Washington was seeking to boost non-lethal military aid to Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda to contain Sudanese-sponsored insurgencies, Reuters said. Taha complained the move was "absolutely unjustified".

Arms shipments from Asia alleged

A former Sudanese envoy in Malaysia has alleged the embassy in Kuala Lumpur has been coordinating arms deals with east Asian suppliers and reached an agreement with a Malaysian company to covertly ship the weapons to Sudan. The ex-attache, Abd al-Aziz Kattab, resigned and defected on Monday to the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA). According to NDA radio monitored by the BBC, he claimed that Khartoum was planning to buy "heavy weapons" from China, Indonesia and the Russian mafia. Meanwhile, Sudan's National Assembly on Monday approved additional finances for security which would be paid for by cuts of 12 percent in other areas of government spending, the official Sudanese News Agency said. The report did not specify the new security expenditure which is to cover the period July-December.

[Correction: FHI is the acronym for Food for the Hungry as opposed to Feed the Hungry as carried in Emergency Update 248. FHI also points out that the plane mentioned in the item was not chartered by the organisation.]

Nairobi, 1 October 1997, 15:00 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 262 on the Great Lakes (Friday, 3 October 97)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: UN hopes for deal with Kabila within two weeks

The UN said it hoped to reach a deal with DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila on the deployment into the field of the UN human rights investigative mission within the next two weeks. UN chief spokesman Fred Eckhard told correspondents at UN headquarters in New York yesterday (Thursday) that four members of the team, not three as previously reported, had been recalled for "consultations" and would arrive in New York next Tuesday, 7 October. The four included the three principal investigators - Atsu-Koffi Amega, Reed Brody and Andres Chicovera - and a coordinator, Jose Luis Gomez del Prado. In Kinshasa, AFP quoted Jose Diaz, the spokesman for the rights' probe, as saying the four men would leave the city today (Friday). UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced on Wednesday he was recalling the team from Kinshasa pending "final clarification of the policy of the Democratic Republic of Congo." Eckhard said the UN hoped it would be able to reach agreement "in the next two weeks... on mutually-acceptable terms for the team to get into the field." Annan's decision followed more than four weeks of forced inactivity by the team, despatched to investigate allegations of gross violations of human rights in the country. Eckhard said Kabila had denied press reports he wanted the mission withdrawn and Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha had told the Secretary-General that his government was eager for the team to start work. "We remain hopeful that something can be worked out to allow that to happen," Eckhard said.

UN says Kabila's remarks not main reason for move

Eckhard again stressed Kabila's supposed remarks that he wanted the team withdrawn had not prompted the UN decision, saying the reports by international news agencies were really "just the tip of the iceberg". He said there had been a substantial amount of frustration at the UN over its failure to arrive at a specific agreement with the DRC government on the terms for the team to begin its work. "It was a much bigger problem than that one report," Eckhard told correspondents.

Humanitarian sources say Mai-Mai control much of area north of Bukavu

Humanitarian sources told IRIN that Mai-Mai fighters and allies from other anti-Tutsi factions were by Friday in control of much of the area between Katana, some 45 km north of Bukavu, and Kalehe, a further 20 km to the north. Aid workers who travelled along the road from Bukavu towards Kavumu, the location of Bukavu airport, on Thursday reported seeing few people and said roads and fields were mostly empty. A few soldiers at the airport were quoted as saying the Mai-Mai were in the area and present in the nearby town of Kavumu. Aid workers said the airport was working normally on Friday.

RWANDA: Thousands reported fleeing to Rutshuru

Aid workers reported that thousands of Hutu people have arrived in recent days in the Rutshuru region of north Kivu, fleeing apparent violence in the Rwerere commune in Gisenyi prefecture. More precise details were not currently available, but one authoritative humanitarian source told IRIN the DRC authorities had today closed the Gisenyi-Goma border crossing.

WFP reports increasing food distributions

WFP in Rwanda has reported that the amount of food distributed is increasing. An average of 1,700 mt has been handed out over the last two weeks, taking the total distributed since January to 98,630 mt. Meanwhile, the FAO Rwandan office has reported that "current food distribution is far below the needs estimated last July by FAO and WFP." Food prices have doubled or even tripled in some regions. Some 2.2 million people or 29 percent of the population are registered by the authorities as requiring assistance. Their needs are partially covered by donors, but there is a shortfall of US $1.6 million, the report says.

UGANDA: Government says rebels killed 83 people during September

Ugandan newspapers today quoted military sources as saying at least 83 people were killed and some 30 abducted by anti-government rebels operating in western Uganda during September. AFP quoted the reports as saying the Ugandan army had killed 52 Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels, while 29 civilians died either at the hands of the rebels or in crossfire during the month, for the loss of only two government soldiers. Following a raid by the rebels on a suburb of Kasese town in western Uganda last week, the army stepped up pursuit operations and on Tuesday reported overrunning an ADF hideout in Kitgumba forest in the district.

ADF say they are ready for peace talks

Meanwhile, in a statement sent to IRIN, the ADF rebels said they were ready to open negotiations with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni "whenever he is ready". The two-page statement, signed by ADF Chairman Frank Kithasamba, said the rebels now had the upper hand against the government forces and could "take and occupy at will" the towns of Kasese, Bundibugyo, Kabele, Kabarole, Kisoro, Hoima, Masindi, Ibanda, Mbarara and Mubende. The statement added that the ADF forces were, consequently, not concerned about a joint Ugandan-DRC army offensive against them, but said they understood from their own experience that "he who wins by force has won but half his foe."

LRA rebels dismiss government claims they are in trouble

Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels have dismissed Ugandan government assertions their leader Joseph Kony is starving in his hideout in

northern Uganda and looking for a way to cross into Kenya, according to IPS. The agency reported an LRA statement yesterday as saying the government claims were "rubbish". Last week, local press reports quoted Brigadier James Kazini, the army's overall commander in northern Uganda, as saying Kony and 300 of his followers had been forced out of bases in southern Sudan and were on the run. The four-page LRA statement carried the group's logo, but not the usual signature of its secretary-general, Dominic S Wanyama, or spokesperson John Obita, both of whom operate from Nairobi, IPS reported.

TANZANIA: Bush fires rage on Mount Kilimanjaro

The UN warned on Friday that bush fires raging on Mount Kilimanjaro had now devastated about 5,000 hectares. The fires, at an altitude of between 2,800-4,000 metres, currently pose no major threat to local populations, but are destroying rare and endangered habitat. The UN, appealing for international help to combat the fires, said government troops lacked adequate equipment.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: DRC soldiers search Kinkole camp

Humanitarian sources reported that on Tuesday 30 September DRC soldiers entered Kinkole refugee camp outside Kinshasa to search for people they said could be linked to recent attacks on the city and detained 41 people. UNHCR was not present when the searches took place and reportedly the organisation does not yet have access to the detainees.

Rival forces battle on

Rival forces battled today for control of Congo's capital Brazzaville, trading artillery fire amid mixed reactions to proposed military intervention by the DRC. AFP reported heavy gunfire could be witnessed in Brazzaville from the capital of Kinshasa. Several shells fired in Brazzaville hit Kinshasa earlier this week causing 21 deaths. Meanwhile, the contested premier of Congo, Bernard Kolelas, yesterday welcomed a proposal from Kabila to send DRC troops to Brazzaville to form the basis of an Afican peacekeeping force.

Nairobi, 3 October 1997, 15:00 gmt

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 263 on the Great Lakes (Saturday-Monday, 4-6 October 97)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: UNHCR pulls out of Goma

UNHCR said it pulled out most of its staff from the Goma area of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) today (Monday) in compliance with a government order to leave.A small skeleton crew remains in the town on the border with Rwanda to close down the agency's office. Nine UNHCR staff flew out of Goma airport for Nairobi on a Buffalo aircraft. They were searched before departure and were not allowed to leave with office equipment. A statement by the DRC ministry of interior on Sunday said that official equipment was to be left behind in the safe-keeping of the provincial authorities.

A letter from the interior ministry was delivered to UNHCR via the office of the governor of North Kivu on Friday suspending the agency's operations. The authorities also demanded that all organisations dealing with refugees, including NGOs, also leave the Goma area. So far however, UNHCR is the only one which has officially received the order to depart. The ministry on Sunday accused UNHCR of political interference. It also questioned why UNHCR remained in the area "even though there are no more refugees in Goma." It alleged the agency was encouraging the entry of Rwandan refugees into DRC.

DRC says more than 4,000 Rwandans recently repatriated

The statement said that the authorities had currently repatriated more than 4,000 Rwandan refugees. "We can no longer accept Rwandans in the Kivus. That's the reason why [UN]HCR is obliged to stop any activity in the Kivus," the statement said. Following Kinshasa's announcement on the border closure and the expulsion of Rwandans, UNHCR said it "strongly condemned" the expulsion. It said it was "deeply concerned about the implications this announcement will have for Rwandan refugees who have begun crossing the border again in recent days to avoid renewed fighting in western Rwanda." On the other side of the border, the Rwandan army again attacked Hutu rebels on Saturday near Gisenyi, AFP quoted defence ministry spokesman Jean-Paul Kymonyo as saying.

Government arrests ex-FAZ suspects

Interior Minister Mwenze Kongolo said yesterday his government had arrested several dozen suspected members of the ex-Zairean army who were posing as refugees from the conflict in neighbouring Congo-Brazzaville. News organisations said Kongolo told a press conference that a "routine operation" last Tuesday was designed to identify former soldiers of the Zairean Armed Forces (FAZ) who had infiltrated into the DRC alongside genuine refugees. Kongolo did not say how many refugees had been arrested at Kinkole, some 30 km northeast of Kinshasa.

Humanitarian sources say refugees now number over 32,000

Humanitarian sources say the number of refugees from the fighting in Brazzaville increased last week to 32,068 from 28,551 the previous week, but said only around 35 percent of them were staying at Kinkole refugee camp. They said the remainder had found shelter with Congolese families in Kinshasa. They added that a measles epidemic recently broke out in the camp and UNICEF have vaccinated some 2,275 children. Meanwhile, DRC television reported that the National Security Council had called on all Congo-Kinshasa nationals harbouring any Congo-Brazzaville citizens to have them registered urgently by the local authorities.

DRC says it has found 1,000 ex-Rwandan troops

Kongolo announced yesterday the DRC had found more than 1,000 heavily-armed soldiers of the former Rwandan Hutu-dominated army and their Interahamwe militia allies in Equateur province in the northwest of the country. The minister told the press conference the soldiers were near Mbandaka and holding an unspecified number of Rwandan refugees as hostages. He added they were dangerous and military action would be necessary.

Kagame arrives on first visit to DRC

Meanwhile, Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame arrived in Kinshasa today on his first visit to the DRC, state television reported. Kagame, who led the mainly Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front to power in Kigali in 1994, was to discuss the border situation with Kabila, AFP quoted an informed source as saying. Kagame made a brief statement saying that he would hold talks on "common problems to find solutions," notably regarding tension arising from clashes between Rwandan troops and Hutu rebels near the border and their repercussions for "the situation in Goma and other concerns."

RWANDA: Houses vacated for former refugees

Some 8,000 families in southeastern Rwanda are leaving houses and shelters they have occupied since 1994 to allow other former refugees to regain their homes. Each family has two weeks to move out of the houses they have used since 1994 when most of them returned to the country they fled in the 1960s. They are each being given a plot of land to build a new home, except those moving to cities, who are being given plastic sheeting.
Kenya hands over four Rwandans and one Burundian to ICTR

The Kenyan government has handed over five genocide suspects, four Rwandans and one Burundian, to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania, Rwandan radio, monitored by the BBC, reported on Friday. The Rwandans, who were arrested in Nairobi in

July, were named as Colonel Laurent Serubuga, Major Emmanuel Neretse, Bonaventure Habimana, former general secretary of the ex-ruling party - the Republican National Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND) - and Maurice Ntahobali, former speaker of the national assembly. The name of the Burundian was not made available.

Rwanda calls for "mini-Marshall plan"

Rwanda called on Friday for the UN to adopt a "mini-Marshall plan" to help rebuild the African country devastated by tribal fighting and genocide. News reports quoted Foreign Minister Anastase Gasana as saying the organisation should sponsor the plan "for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the first African nation to be the victim of genocide." Speaking before the General Assembly, Gasana also called for increased international aid to Rwanda, saying it had received more than 1.4 million refugees from the former Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi since November 1996.

Refugees expelled from Tanzania

Tanzania has expelled 181 Rwandan refugees, some of whom had been living in the country since 1951, a Rwandan official said yesterday. Protais Musoni, government representative in the southeastern town of Kibungo, said the refugees had been brought to the border in military trucks, and were now in a transit camp. "Most of them are old caseload but some just left in 1994," news organisations reported Musoni as saying.All of the refugees had been living in the Biharamuro area of northern Tanzania. Radio Rwanda quoted some of those expelled as saying that the Tanzanians had cited security reasons for the measures, which would be implemented in other areas of the country housing Rwandans.

BURUNDI: Burundi and Tanzania trade accusations

Burundi has called on South Africa and Mozambique to join in efforts to solve its crisis and once again refused the help of Tanzania as a mediator. News organisations quoted Foreign Minister Luc Rukingama as repeating accusations the current mediation, led by former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, was not neutral. "We would like two or three other countries to join in," he was quoting as telling reporters at the UN's New York headquarters on Friday. He cited South Africa and Mozambique as countries which could help, as well as the European Union, which has already sent a special envoy to the region. "We would like the issue (of the crisis) to be discussed in the sub-region in order to change the location (of the negotiations) and expand the mediation, which is not neutral," Rukingama added.

Meanwhile, a pro-government Tanzanian newspaper yesterday renewed an allegation that Burundi is planning to attack refugee camps in the west of the country housing Burundian Hutu refugees. AFP reported from Dar es Salaam that the Swahili-language paper Mzalendo, which is controlled by Tanzania's ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party, said the Burundian army was planning incursions into Tanzania to kill Burundian Hutus. The paper was quoted as saying mortars would be used in "the invasion and subsequent massacre" targetting the more than 200,000 Burundian Hutus who fled the civil war in their country and are sheltering in camps in Tanzania not far from the border with Burundi. Report shows low nutritional levels in conflict-hit populations

WFP in Burundi says a report by the NGO Children's Aid Direct has found extremely low nutritional levels among conflict-affected populations in Bubanza province. A nationwide assessment of Caritas nutritional programmes also indicates serious nutritional problems in areas of conflict. WFP says as a result it will provide 870 mt of food commodities for therapeutic and supplementary programmes with an estimated 34,620 malnourished persons benefiting from such programmes during the next three months.

UN sources say security still a problem in Kayanza

UN sources report there has been no improvement in the security situation in Kayanza province and say the re-installation of regrouped persons remains suspended. During a recent attack on a regroupment camp in Rango commune, 900 shelters are reported to have been burned. Another camp for regrouped populations was attacked in Bubanza province and further incidents were reported in Cibitoke and Bujumbura Rural, as well as along the border with Tanzania, with exchanges of fire taking place between troops of both countries.

WFP says its caseload now totals 234,950

WFP reports that between 22 and 28 September, its beneficiary caseload totalled 234,950 persons. In Karuzi province 420 mt of food were distributed to 24,091 beneficiaries and seed protection packages were provided to 27,420 persons in Bubanza. Some 3,030 recently displaced persons in Kayanza were provided with emergency food rations and an additional 8,820 rations were provided to ACF for distribution to new arrivals. WFP food commodities were also distributed to returnees and participants in food-for-work programmes.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Rivals in fresh clashes

Rival militia in the Congolese capital Brazzaville duelled with artillery shells and rockets over the weekend in renewed clashes between the forces of President Pascal Lissouba and Denis Sassou Nguesso, according to news reports. Witnesses said the fighting between the two forces, which has continued on and off for the last four months, appeared to concentrate in the centre of Brazzaville and an eastern sector of the city lost by Sassou Nguesso's forces last week. Meanwhile, AFP reported that three or four military observers from the DRC had arrived in the city to assess the situation.

Nairobi, 6 October 15:45 gmt

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 264 on the Great Lakes (Tuesday, 7 October 97)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Goma quit order applies to UNHCR alone - sources

The vice-governor of North Kivu told a meeting of international humanitarian agencies today (Tuesday) that the government's order for all organisations working with refugees to leave Goma applied only to UNHCR, aid sources report. He said he had spoken to the interior ministry and this was now Kinshasa's official position. UNHCR spokesman Peter Kessler told IRIN that the government's decision to expell the refugee agency would affect directly or indirectly more than 1,000 people employed in programmes in North Kivu.

Ogata denounces expulsions

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata on Monday "strongly denounced" the expulsion of hundreds of Rwandan refugees from the DRC. According to UNHCR, DRC soldiers trucked 830 Rwandan refugees, including 753 women and children, to the border over the weekend. Four of the refugees were arrested on their return to Rwanda. "The DRC is a signatory to international conventions on refugees. Its actions against refugees in recent days constitute a violation of their commitments," Ogata said in a statement. "Our efforts to help these people have been frustrated at every turn," she said.

The Kinshasa authorities announced on Sunday they had sent back 4,000 Rwandan refugees, but UNHCR said it had only seen the 830 Rwandans trucked over the weekend to Gisenyi. The agency said it had no details that some 1,500 ex-FAR were also handed over to Kigali from DRC.

Fighting subsides on DRC border

Heavy fighting at the weekend between the Rwandan army and Hutu rebels in the Rutshuru/Gisenyi area has reportedly quietened down. "It seems to be calm, we don't hear it anymore, but we don't know what's happening in the communes," one aid worker told IRIN. There have been no reports of refugees fleeing into the DRC in the last few days from Rwanda's western region. The Goma-Gisenyi border closed by the DRC government on Friday remains officially shut, but according to humanitarian sources local commercial traffic was crossing today.

UN to decide on fate of investigative mission

The UN will decide within 15 days whether human rights investigators should return to the DRC or the entire mission should be scrapped, UN Security Council President Juan Somavia said on Monday. Somavia said the Secretary-General would need 15 days for "a final decision on how things should go forward," Reuters reported. UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said the four recalled UN investigators would probably see Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Tuesday. Annan recalled four leading members of the mission last Wednesday after they had spent nearly six weeks in Kinshasa without being able to start their probe into gross violations of human rights abuse.

Minister visits refugees in northwestern Rwanda

DRC Rehabilitation Minister Etienne Mbaya on Sunday visited DRC refugees in Mudende camp in Gisenyi, northwestern Rwanda, local radio reported. The minister brought a message from DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila assuring the refugees that the government was trying to ensure their return home. The refugees in Mudende are ethnic Tutsis. The camp was attacked in late August by Hutu rebels crossing from DRC and more than 100 refugees were massacred.

RWANDA: Sex crimes to be added to genocide court charges

Sexual offences will be added to the charges against Rwandans facing trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania, the UN court said. Prosecutor Louise Arbour told reporters yesterday they would feature on future charge lists and could be levelled against defendants already charged with other crimes. Arbour made the announcement after a weekend seminar held to try and define the most effective way of prosecuting offences of sexual violence at the international human rights courts for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

Indictment confirmed on Hassan Ngeze

ICTR Judge Lennart Aspegren yesterday confirmed three counts out of four in the indictment of Hassan Ngeze, former editor-in-chief of the 'Kangura' newspaper, the court said in a press release. It added the court also issued a warrant of arrest which was served on Ngeze. Ngeze is currently detained at the ICTR's detention facility in Arusha. The indictment alleges that Ngeze knowingly, with his consent and at his direction, published or allowed to be published certain materials which were used in the preparation of genocide against Tutsis; incited to kill and/or cause serious bodily or mental harm to Tutsis; and persecuted Tutsis and certain Hutus.

WFP says malnutrition rates on the increase

WFP in Rwanda says that, although the country has not yet been hit by famine, shortages have pushed food prices two or three times higher in recent weeks and reports that malnutrition rates are already on the increase. The UN food agency said that in Gikongoro area the NGO Sanitaire had recorded a rise in rates of 10 percent over the last few months. During the coming weeks, WFP seed protection food packages will be distributed to around half a million Rwandans. A total of 900 mt of food has already been delivered to the communes for this purpose.

UGANDA: Death toll from LRA bus attack could number 30

The death toll from an ambush on a bus in northern Uganda may be as high as 30, AFP quoted the the independent 'Monitor' newspaper as saying on Sunday. Military officials had previously reported eight people had been killed in an attack on Friday morning by some 40 rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The attack, the first of its kind in the northern districts of Gulu and Kitgum since last year, appeared to be a response to recent government claims the LRA was as good as finished and leader Joseph Kony on the run.

Aid agencies encourage people to return home

Humanitarian sources said aid agencies were preparing the distribution of return packages to Ugandans in the Bundibugyo area of western Uganda, displaced by fighting between government forces and Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels. They said WFP would distribute a two-month food resettlement ration through its implementing partners, but warned a new emergency now appeared to be developing further south where thousands more people are displaced following recent attacks near Kasese.

ANGOLA: UNITA official arrives in Luanda to set up party hq

The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) has said it plans to establish its headquarters in the Angolan capital, Luanda, to demonstrate its full commitment to the peace process, Angolan state radio reported. UNITA Deputy Secretary-General Correia Victor arrived in the city last Friday to begin this process. The radio quoted Victor as stressing the need to conclude the swift implementation of the 1994 Lusaka peace accord between UNITA and the Angolan government which provides for the demilitarisation of the former rebel movement and the return of all the country to state administration.

BURUNDI: Monitors report increase in rebel attacks

Human rights monitors reported an upsurge of rebel attacks in September in the provinces of Bubanza, Makamba, Cibitoke and Bujumbura Rural, triggering immediate reprisals from the army during which civilians were killed. Between the end of August and end of September, they said they believed some 100 people were killed in incidents in those provinces. They added that during the weekend of 20-21 September, two incidents in Gitaza and Mubone left 26 people dead and over 30 injured. Meanwhile, they also reported an increase in armed robberies in the capital Bujumbura which they said had seen on average one armed attack per week.

Parliament meets, but no quorum - again

Burundi's parliament, its numbers decimated by assassination and exile, reconvened yesterday after an annual break, but again failed to attract enough legislators for a quorum, Reuters reported. Though technically functioning, Burundi's parliament has done little since being restored in October last year by military strongman Pierre Buyoya who initially dissolved it after seizing power in an army coup the previous July. Regional countries who clamped economic sanctions on Burundi after the coup insisted on parliament resuming its work.

Nairobi, 7 October 1997 15:30 gmt

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 265 on the Great Lakes (Wednesday, 8 October 97)

RWANDA: Rebel attack on Gisenyi repulsed

Rwandan Hutu rebels attacked the western border town of Gisenyi today (Wednesday), but were repulsed after "heavy fighting", a government official told IRIN. Clashes, however, continued into the afternoon "not far from the town" as the army pursued the rebels into the hills. The sound of mortar fire was heard across the border in Goma. The government official denied initial reports the army had lost control of the airport. "There was fighting around the airport, but not in the airport," he said. An aid worker confirmed the airport remained in government hands. Casualty figures are at the moment unknown.

The official told IRIN the rebels - "a coalition of Interahamwe, ex-FAR and their allies" - approached the town last night before launching their attack early this morning. The rebels were based in the prefecture rather than coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), he said. Humanitarian sources say the rebels had been based on the Rwandan side of the Virunga forest. However, they then crossed into the DRC to sidestep the army before re-entering Rwanda to launch the attack.

According to humanitarian sources in Goma, 280 Rwandan refugees fled across the border to escape the fighting and were gathered at Goma airport. There were also reports by aid workers that the DRC army requisitioned vehicles in Goma - including a UNHCR truck - to transport their troops to the border.

Meanwhile, Hutu rebels killed 18 people in an attack on three separate families at Cyanika, 25 km northeast of Ruhengeri town on Monday night, the private Rwanda News Agency reported.

American nun testifies in war crimes trial

An American nun on Tuesday testified against a Rwandan district administrator standing trial for war crimes before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Sister Marie Farrington said it was "impossible" for Clement Kayishema to have been unaware of massacres committed in the western district of Kibuye in 1994, AFP quoted independent Radio Agatashya as reporting. Kayishema is being tried jointly with businessman Obed Ruzindana for genocide and crimes against humanity. Farrington, who heads the order of the Sisters of Saint Mary of Namur, arrived in Rwanda six-weeks after the civil war and genocide began.

Meanwhile, a Rwandan court-appointed lawyer specialising in defending suspected Rwandan war criminals was on Tuesday charged with committing acts of genocide. AFP said sources in Kigali described the arrest as a political move. Andre Bimenyimana was among a handful of people, with or without legal training, willing to defend war crime suspects. He is being held in Kigali's main prison. Last week the head of the Rwandan bar association said the independence of the legal profession was essential for "building a state of law."

Opposition party accuse Kigali of murdering activist

A Hutu opposition party on Saturday accused "elements" of the government army of murdering one of its activists, Jean-Baptiste Safari. The Forces of Resistance for Democracy (FRD) said Safari was gunned down at the gates of his home in Kigali. A statement from the group said he was killed for his political views. The statement was signed by former Rwandan interior minister Seth Sendashonga.

Finance minister sacked

Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu on Tuesday sacked Minister of Finance and Planning Jean-Berchmans Birara. Donta Kaberuka, secretary of state at the ministry has been nominated as his replacement, the private Rwanda News Agency reported. No official reason was given for Birara's dismissal.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Anti-UNHCR propaganda deplored

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Tuesday deplored radio and television broadcasts in eastern DRC which he said falsely accused UNHCR of arming Rwandan refugees. He reiterated his confidence in High Commissioner Sadaka Ogata and UNHCR staff in the region who he said had "performed with great courage and distinction in extremely difficult circumstances."

The anti-UNHCR media campaign has been particularly noticeable in Uvira. However, UNHCR said its staff in other offices have been placed "in a very difficult situation." On Monday, the agency encountered problems in flying its staff out of Goma in compliance with a government order to quit the town. Some equipment and personal belongings were confiscated by the authorities at the airport.

Secretary-General meets with investigation team

UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said on Tuesday that Annan had met with senior members of his human rights investigative team to the DRC. The Secretary-General asked them to consult with various departments in the Secretariat and formulate recommendations. He plans to meet with them again before deciding on a course of action, Eckhard said. The team spent more than five weeks in Kinshasa without being able to begin their mission to probe gross human rights violations.

Zambia postpones training of DRC police

The proposed training of DRC police officers by Zambia is on hold. Zambia's Home Affairs Minister Chitalu Sampa said on Monday the delay was because the relationship between the two governments was "still unstable", PANA reported. He told the Zambia News Agency that the two neighbours had common problems to sort out before a proposed joint cooperation commission is formed to guide bilateral relations. "But I'm still optimistic that it will not be long before the commission is formed and training of Congolese police officers started," Sampa said.

UGANDA: ADF kill 18 in Kasese

Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels killed 18 people and wounded seven in a night raid in western Uganda, AFP said quoting local press reports. The attack took place at Kyondo, Kasese district. Among the dead were two children and two pregnant women. Newspaper reports said the casualties were mainly civilians displaced by the rebels from the surrounding mountains.

British aid minister praises Museveni

Clare Short, Britain's secretary of state for international development, described President Yoweri Museveni as "a very fine man", AFP reported. Short, on her first official African tour, held talks with Museveni on Tuesday and later said there had been a "meeting of minds". She refused to be drawn on Uganda's "no-party" political model or the continued insurgency in the north of the country, AFP said. Short is due to arrive in Rwanda today.

Meanwhile, a contingent of military officers from six countries studying at Britain's Royal College of Defence Studies are currently visiting Uganda to study the country's defence concerns and security needs, the Kenyan daily 'The Nation' reported.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Fighting shifts to city centre

Forces of President Pascal Lissouba attacked the positions of his rival, Denis Sassou Nguesso, in the centre of Brazzaville, AFP said today. According to the news agency, the attack indicated Sassou Nguesso had gained ground in a three-pronged offensive launched yesterday. Meanwhile in Kinshasa, President Laurent-Desire Kabila reiterated on Tuesday that if the two rivals could not control soldiers of the former Zairean presidential guard he claimed were using Brazzaville as a base, "we will go in and do it ourselves." AFP also reported that a shell fired from Brazzaville landed west of Kinshasa but caused no casualties.

An embattled Lissouba arrived in Namibia on Monday on what national radio described as a private visit. He was expected to hold talks with Namibian President Sam Nujoma, the South African news agency reported.

TANZANIA: Cholera epidemic widens

A cholera epidemic has struck 17 out of Tanzania's 20 regions and killed more than 920 people since the beginning of the year, according to an official report. The worst-hit regions are Lindi, Mtwara, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam and the coast area. Cholera cases have also spread into the previously unaffected areas of Arusha and Mara. From 1 January to 18 September there have been 16,727 reported cases and 922 deaths. Half of the total fatalities occurred in the period between July and September.

An international aid worker told IRIN the most important aspect was not the number of cases, but the percentage of the population at risk. "If 17 regions out of 20 are reportedly affected, its a serious matter," he said. He added the current drought was exacerbating the problem. A meningitis outbreak has also claimed 26 lives in Tanzania between July and 18 September.

Government urges Burundi to accept Nyerere mediation

The Tanzanian government has urged Burundian leader Major Pierre Buyoya to accept the mediation efforts of elder statesman Julius Nyerere and regional countries. National radio also reported on Tuesday that Prime Minister Frederick Sumaye said Tanzania did not want to see Buyoya's opponents seize power. Sumaye said he had toured several refugee camps for Burundians in Tanzania and had warned them not to get involved in politics on Tanzanian soil. Burundi has repeatedly alleged that Dar es Salaam backs Burundian Hutu rebels operating from the refugee camps and has accused former Tanzanian president Nyerere of being biased as a peace mediator.

SUDAN: Recruiting of school children to army defended

Sudan's defence minister has justified the deployment of high school students in battle against southern rebels on the basis of a shortage of regular troops, news agencies reported. "All fit students, after undergoing training, have been attached to various armed forces units to make up for the manpower shortage," Defence Minister Hassan Abdul Rahman Ali said in a statement to the National Assembly on Monday.

Nairobi, 8 October 1997, 16:00

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 266 on the Great Lakes (Thursday, 9 October 1997)

RWANDA: Army says it controls Gisenyi

The Rwandan army today (Thursday) affirmed it was in control of the situation in Gisenyi where soldiers have been battling Hutu rebel infiltrators. Army spokesman Richard Sezibera told AFP "several rebel attacks" had been repulsed around the northwestern town yesterday. The army had "beaten the rebels and pursued them," he added. The bulk of the fighting was concentrated around the airport, he explained. At least 80 rebels and two soldiers died in the clashes, according to the spokesman. A further six soldiers were injured. Humanitarian sources have indicated a number of civilians were also wounded. A Rwandan government official told IRIN yesterday the attacks were launched by a "coalition of Interahamwe, ex-FAR and their allies". The army is now reportedly carrying out mopping up operations in the area.

France rules out "slanging match" with Kigali

The French ambassador to Rwanda, Jacques Courbin, said yesterday Paris did not want to begin a "slanging match" with Kigali. The comments came after Presidency Minister Patrick Mazimhaka, in an interview with AFP, called on France to confess its "past errors" with regard to Rwanda. He said France must accept responsibility for its support of former president Juvenal Habyarimana, whose death triggered the 1994 genocidal war in Rwanda.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: ADFL, Rwanda accused of refugee massacres

A human rights report, released today, alleges the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) and Rwandan soldiers were responsible for the massacre of Rwandan refugees in the former Zaire during the ADFL campaign to capture the country. The report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH) was the product of a six-week mission to eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The report contains photographs of what are believed to be mass graves. HRW and FIDH said some roads were also "littered" with the decomposed bodies of refugees. The report also quotes eyewitnesses as saying US troops had been deployed in DRC between November 1996 and August 1997, although US officials have denied any involvement.

Rwanda, DRC discuss border security

On Tuesday, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) pledged to put an end to armed groups operating in eastern DRC which threatened the security of neighbouring Rwanda, DRC television reported.Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame, on a visit to Kinshasa, and President Laurent-Desire Kabila were said to have concentrated on border security during their discussions, which the television described as "private". Earlier, speaking in Lubumbashi, Kabila reiterated that the border with Rwanda would remain closed to prevent the arrival of more refugees. He claimed the refugees had come to DRC to "cause chaos" and should go home. Kagame arrived back in Kigali yesterday, saying the visit had enabled him to "examine matters of common interest".

DRC warns Brazzaville shelling is "war declaration"

Kinshasa has warned Congo (Brazzaville) that shelling of the DRC capital amounts to a "declaration of war", and that such action would not be tolerated. According to government spokesman Raphael Ghenda, two soldiers were killed and another seriously when shells hit Kinshasa yesterday. DRC, which has sent troops to Brazzaville to act as military observers, retaliated by shelling the Congolese capital. Reports from Brazzaville suggest fighting between the warring sides of President Pascal Lissouba and his predecessor Denis Sassou Nguesso has intensified. On Tuesday, ex-president Sassou Nguesso warned civilians to leave their homes in the government-held southern districts of Bacongo and Makele-Kele. A spokesman for Sassou Nguesso said the only way to end the conflict is militarily.

CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE): Lissouba's "bodyguards" expelled from Namibia

Five South Africans, said to be guarding Lissouba during his visit this week to Namibia, were deported yesterday for "not following the correct procedures" when they entered the country. According to Namibian radio, there was speculation the five men were mercenaries from the South African Executive Outcomes company. However a spokesman for the company, quoted by AFP, denied its employees were involved in the Congo conflict.

BURUNDI: 12 rebels killed by army

The Burundi army killed 12 rebels on Tuesday during mopping up operations in southern Burundi, an army spokesman said yesterday. Lt-Col Isaie Nibizi said the rebels, who have rear bases in neighbouring Tanzania, were trying to establish themselves in Kazirabagemi in Makamba province.

SUDAN: One killed in bombing raid on Yei

The Sudanese airforce bombed the rebel-held southern town of Yei on Tuesday, killing one civilian and wounding three others, news reports quoted aid officials as saying.From bases in Juba, government planes have carried out around 12 bombing raids on Yei since the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army captured the town in March.

Nairobi, 9 October 1997, 14:50 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 267 on the Great Lakes (Friday, 10 October 1997)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Lissouba admits fall of Brazzaville airport

Congolese President Pascal Lissouba is in Kinshasa for talks with President Laurent-Desire Kabila, although no further details of his visit have been released. Speaking to reporters today (Friday), he admitted his forces had lost control of Brazzaville airport to supporters of his rival, ex-president Denis Sassou Nguesso. AFP quoted him as saying: "We lost a battle, but that does not mean we lost the war." Meanwhile, Sassou Nguesso is reported to have signed a ceasefire accord, in a move welcomed by the UN Security Council yesterday (Thursday), AFP reported. Spokesman Fred Eckhard said the UN hoped a cessation of hostilities would now follow. Lissouba signed the truce deal last month.

US denies knowledge of massacres

The US State Department yesterday denied claims in a human rights report that Washington was aware of massacres in eastern DRC, allegedly carried out by the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) and Rwandan soldiers. A State Department spokesman described the allegations by Human Rights Watch and the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues as "absolutely false".UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said the report underlined the need for a UN investigation into the massacres. A UN investigative team in Kinshasa and the DRC government have so far failed to reach agreement on modalities for conducting the probe. Four members of the mission were recalled to New York last week, and the USA has said it plans to send an envoy to the region to try and break the deadlock.

UGANDA: Museveni backs Kabila over UN probe

President Yoweri Museveni yesterday backed DRC leader Laurent-Desire Kabila's objections to the UN probe and said Secretary-General Kofi Annan should "broaden the scope of his investigations". "If he (Annan) wants to give the world a comprehensive picture, he must start from the beginning," Museveni told a rally in Kampala to mark Uganda's 35th independence anniversary. "I think the government of Congo is right in objecting to his approach." According to Reuters, Museveni added it would be "good if he (Annan) liaises closely with us."

Museveni slams Sudan for supporting Ugandan rebels

Elsewhere in his speech, Museveni also lashed out at the Sudanese government accusing it of sponsoring attacks by Ugandan rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army. "When (LRA leader) Kony came from Sudan, he had orders to capture Ugandan soldiers and take them to Sudan, so Sudan can have these soldiers to parade around," he said. He claimed Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and spiritual leader Hassan Turabi were "sending the rebels and giving them means", AFP reported. Museveni affirmed that troops fighting the rebels in northern Uganda were in a strong position because there were many "fresh soldiers" there.

Uganda Africa's top coffee producer

Turning to Uganda's economic performance, Museveni announced the country had become Africa's biggest producer of coffee. "This year we exported more coffee than we have ever done in our history - a record 2.4 million bags - and became the leading producer in Africa, overtaking the Ivory Coast," he said. He stated that Uganda should begin manufacturing its own goods and forge closer ties with other coffee producing countries in southeast Asia and South America to have better bargaining power with western buyers.

ICRC ends distribution in Nyahuka

The International Committee of the Red Cross has just finished distributing blankets, plastic sheeting and soap to over 14,000 internally displaced people in Nyahuka, southwestern Uganda. The town's original population of 3,000 increase sixfold after thousands of people arrived there in June, fleeing clashes between the army and rebels. Most of the displaced are living in makeshift huts in the bush around the town, although some have found shelter in crowded churches and schools, ICRC said.

RWANDA: Reinforcements sent to Gisenyi

The Rwandan army sent reinforcements to the embattled northwestern town of Gisenyi today, Reuters reported. It quoted defence ministry spokesman Richard Sezibera as saying the situation in the town was calm and mopping up operations were continuing. Soldiers were searching for Hutu rebels, who launched an attack on the town on Wednesday. "Some came from the Congo and went back there after we engaged them," Sezibera said. "Others came from local communities and we think some of them melted back into civilian life there." He added that the attack had appeared well-coordinated, taking place on three fronts around Gisenyi. According to Reuters, aid workers reported seeing troop reinforcements on both sides of a wide frontier between Rwanda and DRC.

British minister visiting

British Secretary of State for International Development Clare Short arrived in Kigali yesterday on a two-day visit to Rwanda, Rwandan radio reported. She is due to meet top government officials to discuss relations between Rwanda and Britain. During her visit, she will also visit a site of genocide victims and Kigali prison.

KENYA: Riot police stop opposition rally

Riot police in Nairobi fired bullets and tear gas to stop an opposition rally going ahead today, AFP reported. It said some 1,000 people were prevented from holding the gathering at the Kamukunji grounds at the same time as President Daniel arap Moi addressed a rally in the city's Uhuru Park to mark Moi Day. In his speech, Moi condemned the continuing violence in Kenya and warned that the ruling KANU party would not allow people associated with violence to contest the forthcoming elections.

Nairobi, 10 October 1997, 12:50 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 268 on the Great Lakes (Saturday-Monday, 11-13 October 1997)

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Attacks reportedly launched from Cabinda

The conflict in Congo widened over the weekend after allegations of Angolan involvement on both sides. News reports indicated that Angolan government forces had helped the militia of ex-Congolese president Denis Sassou Nguesso launch an attack from Cabinda enclave on southern Congo, while UNITA troops were said to be assisting President Pascal Lissouba's army. An Angolan defence ministry statement on Sunday said there had been several violations of Angolan airspace and infiltrations into Cabinda since the start of the Congo conflict. From 29 September, these violations became "deliberate air and ground attacks against civilians and units of the national police and armed forces" stationed in the border area, the statement said. These attacks caused several dead and wounded and had "reached dangerously aggressive proportions". For this reason, the statement warned, the Angolan armed forces "reserve the right to adopt pertinent measures to curb the attacks against the republic of Angola by forces from the republic of Congo". Congolese Prime Minister Bernard Kolelas described the alleged attacks by Angola as an "inadmissable aggression by a brother country".

UNITA says Angolan army helping Sassou Nguesso

The former Angolan rebel group UNITA accused the Angolan armed forces of "continued support" to "military and unelected African rebel forces". UNITA radio quoted sources in Congo as saying Lissouba's government claimed Angolan army units were heading for Loudima, just east of Pointe-Noire, in support of Sassou Nguesso's forces.

Lissouba visits Museveni

Congolese President Pascal Lissouba, meanwhile, visited his Ugandan counterpart Yoweri Museveni in Kampala on Friday to brief him on the situation in Congo. Lissouba had previously been in Kinshasa for talks with President Laurent-Desire Kabila.Ugandan radio reported the meeting between Museveni and Lissouba, but gave no details of the talks. Over the weekend, Lissouba appeared at his presidential palace in Brazzaville to dispel rumours that the building had been taken by Sassou Nguesso's forces. News agencies said the Maya-Maya international airport was also under government control after earlier reports it had fallen to Sassou Nguesso.

Kolelas militia reportedly joins fray

AFP quoted a reliable source as saying the Ninja militia, loyal to Prime Minister Bernard Kolelas and previously neutral in the conflict, had for the first time joined the battle on the government's side in a bid to regain the airport.Heavy fighting was reported in Brazzaville late yesterday and government helicopter raids were observed in the city today (Monday). Twelve French expatriates were reportedly stopped from leaving the southern town of Dolisie, which according to unconfirmed reports had come under attack from Angolan troops, AFP said. People were said to be fleeing Dolisie for Pointe-Noire.

ANGOLA: UNITA warns of deteriorating situation in Huila province

UNITA radio yesterday warned of a "dangerous deterioration" of the situation in Huila province, accusing the Angolan army of an offensive there in which several people have been killed. It claimed Angolan army units based in Caconda had attacked three areas in the province where UNITA offices had been situated, killing at least eight people. The radio urged the UN Observer Mission in Angola to take action.

RWANDA: Gisenyi residents urged to help army

Gisenyi, in northwest Rwanda, was now calm after two days of heavy fighting between Hutu rebels and the army last week, the Rwanda News Agency and humanitarian sources reported. RNA said the local authorities on Friday organised a public rally at the local stadium, urging the people to collaborate with the army and to denounce infiltrators. Thousands of people who had fled the fighting to neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo had now returned home and traffic between Goma in DRC and Gisenyi was normal, the agency said.In an interview with RNA, army spokesman Major Richard Sezibera affirmed the rebels' base was "narrowing, day in, day out". They had been driven from Ruhengeri where the insurgency began, he noted. RNA cited "well-informed sources" on the border with DRC as saying the rebels had massacred civilians in the village of Byahi, but the civilian casualty toll from the fighting was unknown.

Rwanda blasts human rights report

Rwanda has slammed a human rights report alleging Rwandan troops were involved in the massacre of refugees in DRC. Emmanuel Gasana, an adviser to Vice-President Paul Kagame, on Friday described the report by Human Rights Watch and the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues as a "mere compilation of media reports and hearsay reporting", according to the Rwanda News Agency. Gasana said the report lacked credibility. "The very fact that (investigator Scott) Campbell claims to have carried out his investigation hiding from government troops throws doubt on the report," he stated. Gasana pointed out that Rwanda had never hidden the fact that its troops were present in ex-Zaire and the "discipline of our troops is not only when they are on Rwandan soil".

Growing concern over food security

Humanitarian workers have expressed growing concern over the food security situation in Rwanda as seasonal rains are now four weeks behind

schedule. An additional delay throughout October could result in significant losses for the agricultural season. Prime Minister Pierre-Celestin Rwigema has urged donors and humanitarian organisations to help reduce the dependence on food assistance by responding to the outstanding shortfall of US$ 1,027,440 for this season's agricultural programme. Gikongoro, Gitarama and Kibuye prefectures are particularly in need of help.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: UNHCR blasts world's "silence" over refugees

A Geneva-based spokeswoman for UNHCR blamed the international community for its "deafening silence" over the plight of Rwandan refugees in DRC. She said the agency had been ordered to leave Bukavu, after the authorities issued a similar order to pull out of Goma last week. "We are now unable to carry out any of our activities in either North or South Kivu regions," she told a news briefing on Friday. "We are trying to protect refugees, but we're not allowed to do it and states don't seem to be particularly bothered about that".

UNHCR on Saturday repatriated 74 Rwandan refugees who were found in the Mbandaka region of northwest DRC. Of these, 43 were unaccompanied children.

UGANDA: Rebels kill 12 near tourist lodge

Rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) killed 12 people near a tourist lodge in western Uganda last week, AFP reported, quoting a military commander on Saturday. Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Angina, operations commander in western Uganda, said the incident occurred on Thursday in Katwe, Kasese district, four kilometres from the Mweya Safari Lodge used by tourists visiting the Queen Elizabeth National Park. About 20 heavily-armed rebels carried out the attack, he claimed, adding that several people were abducted including two 15 year-old girls.

1,000 civilians said killed this year

The independent 'Monitor' newspaper wrote that nearly 1,000 civilians had been killed in fighting in Uganda since the beginning of the year. According to the paper, the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda was responsible for almost 70 percent of civilian deaths. People were mostly killed by mines, crossfire or specific targeting of civilians, the paper said.

ADF sets conditions for talks with government

Meanwhile the ADF, in a statement, agreed to hold negotiations with the Ugandan government if the latter agreed to several conditions including an end to hostilities against the ADF, a commitment to multi-partyism and President Yoweri Museveni's denunciation of his "involvement in the wars of neighbouring countries". The statement said the ADF did not consider war as a goal in itself, and it appealed to rebel groups in the north to consider entering into dialogue with the government. The ADF called on Museveni to "swallow his pride" and meet the conditions.

SUDAN: Government denies town taken by rebels

The Sudanese authorities today denied claims by the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) that it had captured the strategic garrison town of Belinia in South Kordofan province. Press reports quoted an army spokesman as saying the rebels had simply carried out "looting operations on a post far away", according to AFP. The spokesman said "isolated attacks" by the SPLA were meant to "delude public opinion about the strength" of the rebels, ahead of planned peace talks in Nairobi on 28 October.

Nairobi, 13 October 1997, 15:30 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 269 on the Great Lakes (Tuesday, 14 October 1997)

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Cobra militia seize airport, presidential palace

Forces loyal to Congo-Brazzaville's former military leader Denis Sassou Nguesso today (Tuesday) claimed they had captured the presidential palace and were pushing west through the south of the city, Reuters reported. Sassou Nguesso's Cobra militia are also allegedly in control of Brazzaville's Maya Maya international airport. President Pascal Lissouba's troops, backed by the Ninja militia of Prime Minister Bernard Kolelas, claimed they had retaken the airport at the weekend. AFP reported from Kinshasa that refugees "poured out" of Brazzaville as southern districts controlled by presidential forces came under attack by the Cobras. Meanwhile, the French consul in the southwestern port city of Pointe Noire said that "Congolese military authorities" had for three days "prevented" some 50 French nationals from leaving the town, AFP said.

Cobras advance in southwest

Sassou Nguesso's forces said they had also seized three strategic sites in Lissouba's southwestern home region. Rebel radio said the town of Dolisie, on the border with Angola's oil-enclave of Cabinda, had been captured along with Loudima and Bouansa, AFP reported. Dolisie is 150 km from the country's second city of Pointe Noire. Radio-Liberte claimed the airstrip at Bouansa had been used by Lissouba's helicopter gunships to attack Brazzaville. There has been no independent confirmation of the Cobra claims. However, a Congolese journalist recently in Pointe Noire told IRIN panic was mounting in the city.

Mediator's envoy arrives in Luanda

An envoy of Gabonese President Omar Bongo arrived in the Angolan capital Luanda late yesterday to discuss the widening civil war in Congo-Brazzaville, AFP reported. The visit follows allegations of Angolan involvement on both sides of the conflict. The envoy brought a message from Bongo - who has been mediating in the four-month long war - for Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos.

Angolan government troops were accused of striking into Congo's oil-rich southern region from Cabinda at the weekend in support of Sassou Nguesso. The Angolan defence ministry said it was responding to attacks on Angolan territory by Lissouba's forces. The former Angolan rebel movement UNITA is also believed to be fighting alongside Lissouba. Regional experts say a potential target of the Angolan army are UNITA's bases and those of the separatist Cabinda Enclave Liberation Front (FLEC-Renewed) in the southern region. "The interests of the Angolans are quite clear," one regional analyst told IRIN. "If Lissouba chooses UNITA to fight for him, the Angolan government is on the other side."

No UN peacekeeping force until peace agreement

The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations is reviewing its contingency plan for Congo-Brazzaville, but there will be no deployment until an effective ceasefire is in place, UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said yesterday. The UN plan calls for the despatch of a total of 5,000 peacekeepers in two stages. The troops would be under Senegalese command and drawn mainly from African countries with western logistical support. "It must be clear that we are not sending anyone to Brazzaville unless the security conditions are guaranteed," a western diplomat told AFP. Mohamed Sahnoun, the Joint UN/OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, left New York for Gabon yesterday for talks with Bongo. Eckhard told AFP that Secretary-General Kofi Annan is waiting to hear from Sahnoun before presenting concrete proposals to the Security Council on the peacekeeping force.

French guard wounded in shelling

A French guard at the French ambassador's residence in southern Brazzaville was wounded in shellfire, AFP reported today. Two shells destroyed a house next to the residence in the Bacongo district of the city on Monday. Meanwhile, Russian-made MiG-21 warplanes belonging to the forces of Sassou Nguesso streaked over the Makele-Kele district late on Monday and two loud explosions were heard, AFP quoted sources in Kinshasa as saying. The news agency said today that 20 people were killed in the raid. Bacongo and Makele-Kele are the strongholds of Kolela's Ninja militia. The two sectors had been relatively untouched by the fighting which has devastated the rest of the city. At the weekend Kolelas dropped his neutrality and joined forces with Lissouba.

ANGOLA: US envoy arrives to assess peace progress

A special envoy of US President Bill Clinton arrived in Angola on Monday to begin evaluating progress towards peace between the Luanda government and former UNITA rebels, AFP reported. The envoy, Paul Hare, will hold talks with Dos Santos and is expected to go to the central region town of Bailundo to meet UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi. The UN Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) considers that the government has almost fully complied with the 1994 peace accord. However, UNITA has still to relinquish strongholds such as Bailundo and Andulo in the centre and its diamond-rich territories in the northeast, AFP said. Meanwhile, Angolan government forces have halted their advance in the Cuando river valley in the northeast province of Lunda, AFP quoted a UN spokesman as saying on Monday. The advance had been sharply criticised by UNITA, which accused the government of deliberately stoking up tensions. The halt, 50 km from the town of Cuango, was negotiated in UN-mediated talks between Luanda and UNITA.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Continued fighting in the east

Humanitarian sources report that at least 100 people died in clashes between the DRC army and Mai-Mai militia along the Lubutu-Kisangani axis

on the night of 7-8 October. Troop reinforcements were sent to the area from Kisangani. The bodies of "several" Rwandan soldiers killed in action were flown out of Kisangani airport on an Antonov 26 aircraft, the sources said.

Continued military operations are reported in the vicinity of Kavumu airport near Bukavu, and the road between Bukavu and Kavumu has been temporarily closed by the military on at least two occasions during the past week. Fighting is also taking place in the Bunyakiri/Katana area of South Kivu.

According to humanitarian sources, young Banyamulenge are being targeted in a new recruitment drive by the military in the Haut Plateaux near Uvira. This coincides with rumours that groups of Mai-Mai rebels are "hunting" Banyamulenge both north of Bukavu and northwest of Fizi.

UGANDA: Rebels attack prison

Rebels in northern Uganda attacked a prison, killing two inmates and abducting several others, the privately-owned 'Crusader' reported today. The rebels, believed to be fighters of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), attacked the prison in Adjumani on Monday after government soldiers stationed in the town left to escort a convoy of cars heading to another town. The two prisoners were killed because they resisted rebel attempts to march them off to the bush, according to the newspaper. It did not say how many inmates were taken away. SUDAN: WFP food barges head down Nile

Barges loaded with relief food have left the central Sudanese river port of Malakal towards Juba, the main city in war-torn south Sudan, WFP said today. "Most of the people have been forced to flee their homes and have been left with no access to agricultural land, making them rely heavily on food assistance," WFP said in a statement. The agency has chartered a convoy of barges to transport 2,664 mt of food aid down the Nile across the front-line in the civil war, according to a spokeswoman. WFP has staff on-board who will distribute food along the way, in both government- and rebel-held areas, to an estimated 370,000 people.

Meanwhile, according to the Kenya daily 'The Nation', thousands of people are fleeing Juba complaining of food shortages and accusing the Islamic government of persecuting Christians and other southerners. A siege by the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has closed land routes to the city.

GREAT LAKES: Ogata calls on governments to respect humanitarian principles

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata opened the 48th annual meeting of UNHCR's Executive Committee on Monday in Geneva with an appeal to governments to respect humanitarian principles. "The greatest and gravest challenges to protection have occurred in the Great Lakes region," she said. Ogata traced the root of the problem back to "the inability or unwillingness of the international community [in 1994] to separate those who deserved international protection from those who did not." Ogata stressed that repatriation involves more than just logistics. It can only be sustainable if basic human rights and justice are restored.

Nairobi, 14 October 1997 16:00 gmt

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 289 on the Great Lakes (Tuesday, 11 November 1997)

TANZANIA: Humanitarian community concerned over refugee expulsions

Senior humanitarian sources have expressed concern at continuing expulsions of Rwandans from Tanzania. At least 1,450 have arrived in Rwanda so far, and the latest information is that Congolese are also now being targetted in the Tanzanian government's roundup of long-term foreign residents and old-caseload refugees. The expulsions by the Tanzanian army began on 4 October. The Rwandan embassy in Dar es Salaam has protested over the deportations, Reuters reported. Tanzania has said the expulsions are part of a security sweep to get rid of illegal aliens along the Burundian and Rwandan borders, because of increasing law and order problems.

Drought slows agricultural growth

Drought slowed agricultural growth in Tanzania in the second half of 1996, according to the central bank's annual report. In the 1996/97 fiscal year, the agricultural sector grew at a rate of 3.9 percent, compared to 5.8 percent in the previous year. The Bank of Tanzania noted that due to a poor farming season, seasonally-adjusted food inflation increased from 15.6 percent in June last year to 24.2 percent for the year ending June 1997, Reuters reported. Real Gross Domestic Product grew by 4.2 percent during the reporting period, below the target of five percent.

BURUNDI: Regional trading bloc calls for lifting of sanctions

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) yesterday (Monday) called for sanctions to be lifted against Burundi. Reuters reported that the 19-member trading bloc meeting in Lusaka said sanctions, imposed after the civilian government was overthrown in July 1996, were futile. "The business community expressed concern at the adverse effects that the economic sanctions imposed against Burundi as a result of recent political changes are having on the country... and her COMESA trading partners," a COMESA statement said. "The meeting noted that imports from countries outside (the) COMESA region are still reaching Burundi. The meeting, therefore, strongly recommends that the sanctions be lifted at the earliest possible opportunity," it added. The COMESA grouping includes Angola, Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

SUDAN: Peace talks adjourned until April 1998

Peace talks between the Sudanese government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) ended today after 10 days. They are due to resume in April next year, "to give time for the two sides to consult with their respective headquarters," a joint communique said. The discussions foundered on the key issues of religion, self-determination and the constitutional character of the state, an SPLA spokesman told IRIN.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: UN probe to begin with "scouting" mission

The three team leaders of the UN probe investigating human rights violations in the DRC are expected to meet with the government in the next two days in preparation for the mission's initial deployment. Mission spokesperson Jose Diaz told IRIN today a "technical deployment" will begin "as soon as possible." A scouting visit, comprising human rights and security officers, is expected to travel to Mbandaka in the north and a site in the east of the country which is yet to be agreed upon. In theory, the mission will then be able to fan out throughout the country without the prior notification of the government. "We are hopeful we will finally be able to start our mission after nearly two months in Kinshasa," Diaz said. The breakthrough followed a visit to Kinshasa by US envoy Bill Richardson. The agreement reached confirmed the mandate of the team as set out by the UN Secretary-General in a 15 July letter to the government.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: France pledges reconstruction aid

The French ambassador to Congo-Brazzaville said on Monday that Paris would provide aid for the reconstruction of the country. Raymond Cesaire said the immediate priority is humanitarian assistance and the restoration of living conditions in the capital. According to Reuters, France is the biggest aid donor to its former colony and Congo-Brazzaville's principal trading partner. Over the weekend the Brazzaville authorities freed seven French nationals accused of backing the government of ousted president Pascal Lissouba.

ANGOLA: Government says it will remove obstacles to peace

The Angolan government has expressed its "firm" intention to remove "all the obstacles that remain in the way" of the peace process. The official statement, released to the media yesterday ahead of independence celebrations today, said the country had reached a "decisive moment" for its political future. In a separate statement on Monday, the former ruling MPLA party called for an "urgent demilitarisation" of ex-rebel UNITA forces, AFP said.

Meanwhile, a senior UNITA official has confirmed that the movement's leader Jonas Savimbi is willing to meet with Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos at a venue to be agreed upon by the two sides. In an interview broadcast by the BBC yesterday, Isais Samakuva said the meeting would help revive the peace process. Samakuva added that UNITA's Foreign Relations Secretary Alcides Sakala has been sent to Luanda to discuss the issue with the government. Luanda has repeatedly called for Savimbi to take his place in a government of national unity. UNITA has however stressed that security concerns have prevented Savimbi from travelling to the capital.

UGANDA: Rebels strike in west, army hits in the north

Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels killed at least four civilians on Sunday in Uganda's western Kabarole District. The privately-owned 'Monitor' reported today that the attack displaced some 2,300 people. Kabarole borders the rebel-hit districts of Bundibugyo and Kasese. Meanwhile, the state-owned 'New Vision' said at least eight Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels were killed in heavy clashes with the army in the Aswa area of northern Gulu district on Friday.

Nairobi, 11 November 1997, 14:00 gmt

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IRIN Emergency Update No. 292 on the Great Lakes (Friday 14 November 1997)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: UN rights team to meet government on Monday

Members of the UN human rights investigative team will meet DRC government officials on Monday, AFP today (Friday) reported mission spokesman Jose Diaz as saying. "We were informed on Thursday evening that the mission will be received on Monday morning by the liaison committee," Diaz said. The team's three leaders arrived back in Kinshasa on Tuesday and immediately informed the government of their plan to operate two simultaneous missions - one to Mbandaka in the northwest and the other to Kisangani in the east. A meeting with government officials headed by Minister for Reconstruction Etienne Richard Mbaya is necessary, however, for the mission to receive the formal go-ahead.

Give Kabila time, urges Nzo

South Africa's Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo said in a speech on Thursday it was too early to judge whether DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila was a democrat or not, but urged the international community to give him time to prove himself. He said the new government had inherited a bankrupt country in which the infrastructure had collapsed. Like South Africa, Kabila's government could not be expected to resolve the problems caused by its predecessors overnight. "I don't agree with the United Nations or anyone who has come to the conclusion that Kabila is not a democrat... it is better if they give him a chance," Nzo said.

UGANDA: Donors pledge $750 million to Uganda

Donor nations have pledged about $750 million in aid to Uganda for the 1998 tax year and praised the government for its economic discipline, the World Bank said yesterday (Thursday). News organisations reported from Paris that the bank had also announced the aid would include $320 million in quickly-disbursed budget support while the rest would be split among project and programme aid handed out as concessional loans and grants. James Adams, the World Bank's country director for Uganda, told a news conference donors were urging the government to make greater efforts to control corruption and had expressed worries over the high levels of defence spending. The army is battling at least three rebel insurgencies. Adams said the 17-strong donor group had also urged the government to take action to make the country's electricity board and railway company more efficient and "to attract private investment in telecommunications without further delay". Separately, AFP reported the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington had granted the country a $138-million credit to support its current economic growth programme.

Rebels kill 18 in attack on Sudanese refugee camp - Monitor

Eighteen people were hacked to death and 14 others left unconscious when thugs claiming to be affiliated to the West Nile Bank Front raided a Sudanese Refugee camp at Waka, Moyo district on the night of 8 November, 'The Monitor' newspaper reported today. Witnesses said the rebels entered Uganda from Kajo-Keji in southern Sudan where they are currently camped and crossed back to Sudan the same night. Meanwhile, Ugandan radio reported President Yoweri Museveni had met with members of the West Nile parliamentary group to discuss security in the region. Museveni told the group the army had deployed heavily in the area and the number of rebel attacks was falling. According to a recent ICRC report on Uganda, some 30,000 displaced are returning to their villages in the West Nile area. Thousands of Ugandan refugees have also arrived home from DRC and Sudan. The report notes that only a few thousand internally displaced remain in the region.

BURUNDI: Army says it captured large rebel arms cache

The Burundian press agency reported on Wednesday the army had killed "many" rebels and captured a large number of weapons during a mopping-up operation in the Rumonge valley in the south of the country on Monday and Tuesday. The agency, monitored by the BBC, quoted Lieutenant-Colonel Isaie Nibizi saying two government soldiers were also killed. He declined to specify how many rebels were killed, but said the weapons recovered included 176 machine guns, 340 machine gun cartridges, six Kalashnikov magazines, and an undisclosed number of anti-personnel mines.

RWANDA: Biya authorises transfer of two genocide suspects

Cameroon's President Paul Biya has authorised the transfer of two Rwandans accused of genocide in 1994 to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania, the court said in a statement today. Both suspects, Laurent Semanza and Jean Bosco Barayagwiza, are accused of calling for the massacre of minority Tutsis at public meetings, distributing weapons and money to the extremist Interahamwe militia, and of ordering and organising genocidal slaughter. In 1994, Semanza was mayor of Bicumbi, a town east of Kigali, and regional president of the then-ruling MRND party. Barayagwiza was director of political affairs in the ministry of foreign affairs. Alert over arrested Rwandan journalist

Reporters sans frontieres and the freedom of expression group IFEX have issued an alert over the fate of Rwandan journalist Joseph Habyarimana. Habyarimana, editor of the magazine 'Indorerwamo', was arrested on 28 October allegedly over an article published in the 'Intego' newspaper in December which highlighted pressures on local officials to arrest Hutus accused of taking part in the 1994 genocide. The article ended with an appeal for ethnic conciliation.

Increased demand for food relief projected

Rwanda's projected harvest is not expected to improve on the past two disappointing seasons despite the arrival of the short rains. According to a new UN report, there will be an increased demand for food assistance in the country in the coming months. The rains, and pockets of insecurity, have however frustrated the movement of food relief. The report notes an improvement in the provision of shelter for returnees and those whose homes were destroyed in 1994. There have so far been an estimated 70,000 houses built compared to a government-calculated demand for 200,000 units.

ANGOLA: Government says UNITA rearming in breach of peace accords

Angola's former rebel UNITA movement has shipped heavy weaponry to new military bases and plans to rearm some of its troops in a serious breach of the 1994 Lusaka peace accords, the government charged on Thursday.. AFP also quoted the commander of Luanda's troops on the southern front, General Francisco Furtado, as saying Jonas Savimbi's UNITA had transported previously "hidden" long-range artillery and other

weapons to "new command posts" and was building up military bases in the regions of Benguela and Huila in the south, Bie and Huambo in the centre and Cuando-Cubango in the southwest. UNITA's Radio Vorgan, meanwhile, stated that UNITA leaders were close to direct talks with President Eduardo dos Santos and were considering a venue and a time. UN observers have accused both sides of redeploying troops in breach of the peace accords.

SUDAN: President orders staff to draft peace plan

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has ordered his staff to draft a plan outlining his government's bid for peace with the southern rebebls, Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha said Thursday. Taha, who gave a briefing to the head of the military junta about recent peace talks in Kenya, was quoted by the Sudan news agency as saying the peace plan would be submitted to Bashir soon. Peace talks ended in Nairobi on Tuesday, but are to due to resume in April.

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IRIN Update No. 295 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 19 November 1997)

BURUNDI: Buyoya rejects claims of involvement in 1993 coup plot

Burundian leader Pierre Buyoya has dismissed claims of involvement in the 1993 attempted military coup in which president Melchior Ndadaye was killed. A statement issued by the presidency yesterday (Tuesday), stressed that no report had ever implicated Buyoya in the coup plot. The allegation was made over the BBC's Kirundi service by Lieutenant Jean Kamana, who stands accused of being one of the main coup plotters. Kamana alleges he was carrying out orders from his superiors. The statement said the claim, coming four years after the event, was a lie "instigated by circles opposed to the government". It was a ploy to derail the peace process, the statement concluded.

22 killed in separate attacks

Fourteen employees of a tea factory in Buhoro in the troubled province of Cibitoke were killed by rebels on Sunday night, according to an interior ministry statement. In another rebel attack, eight people were killed and six wounded in Mutimbuzi, 15 km north of Bujumbura. Local residents, quoted by AFP, said a gang armed with rifles, machetes and knives launched the raid on Saturday night.

UNHCR notes difficult access to Burundians expelled from DRC

UNHCR said some 2,000 Hutus expelled from Democratic Republic of Congo had arrived in Burundi's combat zones where the agency was unable to gain access to most of them. Rwandan and DRC Hutus were thrown out, along with the Burundians, UNCHR said. Some of these were refugees from the 1994 conflict in Rwanda. The DRC government has described those being expelled as "infiltrators" and a threat to security. UNHCR also reported a new influx of refugees into Rwanda fleeing continued fighting in Burundi's Cibitoke province. Several dozen Burundians and over 1,000 Rwandans had arrived in Rwanda over the past week. According to UNHCR, some of the Rwandans claimed they were expelled. DRC radio meanwhile reported that Burundi will soon reopen its consulate in Bukavu.

UNHCR to be streamlined

News reports note UNHCR is planning substantial cutbacks next year, due to dwindling donor contributions and fewer crises. Spokeswoman Pam O'Toole, quoted by Reuters, said the agency's financial situation for the beginning of next year "remains worrying".

ACF finds 14 percent of children malnourished in Kayanza camps

A nutritional survey undertaken by Action contre la faim (ACF) in displaced camps in Kayanza province has found the average malnutrition rate among children aged six to 59 months to be 14 percent, of which 2.4 percent are severe cases. The report, carried out between 29 July and 7 August 1997, recommends enhancing food security by continuing targeted food distributions in the most vulnerable camps. DHA Burundi reported a joint UN-NGO mission on 13 November, for the first time since early this year, was authorised to travel to Rumonge province via the lake route. The mission found that security along the road was better than anticipated, with commercial traffic circulating and people carrying out normal activities.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: NGO organisation warns against restricting cooperation

A DRC NGO organisation, the Conseil National des ONG de developpement du Congo (CNONGD), has called on the government to create better conditions for international cooperation, both direct and indirect. Responding to a government proposal last month which suggested putting an end to indirect cooperation via NGOs, the CNONGD said it shared the authorities' concern over the resumption of international cooperation "in the normal way". However, it warned that restricting cooperation risked "suffocating" the country, and stressed that NGOs sought neither to replace government activities nor to rival them.

Newspaper editor to be freed

President Laurent-Desire Kabila has decided that editor of the opposition 'Phare' newspaper should be released from detention, DRC television reported yesterday. Luboyayi Polydor was detained two months ago for an article in his paper alleging Kabila was creating a presidential guard, similar to the Division Speciale Presidentielle (DSP) of former president Mobutu.

RWANDA: Genocide suspect pleads not guilty

A suspect at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha yesterday pleaded not guilty to six counts of involvement in the 1994 genocide. According to an ICTR press release, Alfred Musuma, a former tea factory director in Kibuye prefecture, entered the plea during his initial appearance before Trial Chamber 1.

KENYA: Thousands facing starvation due to floods

Thousands of Kenyans face starvation because food supplies cannot reach flood-hit areas in the northeast, Reuters said, quoting local officials. Torrential rains have submerged huge areas of Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia, and destroyed roads, bridges and houses. Kenyan Minister of State John Koech, who toured the Garsen area and flooded parts of Tana district at the weekend, was mobbed by desperate villagers, Reuters reported. According to the local press, some 60,000 people are in need of assistance.

Cholera kills six in Coast province

Six people have died of cholera in Coast province and 76 people have been diagnosed as suffering from the disease, Kenyan press reports said today (Wednesday). According to Coast provincial medical officer Dr S.K.Shariff, the deaths occurred in Mombasa and Malindi. The outbreak of the disease was due to poor hygiene and heavy rains which have been lashing the region causing floods and blocking sewers. Shariff added that the government had introduced measures to contain the spread of cholera.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Two pledges received for flash appeal

The UN Inter-Agency Flash Appeal for Congo-Brazzaville has so far received two pledges. The Canadian government has donated US $360,000 to ICRC and the Swedish government US $394,000 for a Swedish church-related NGO. The US $17.7 million appeal was launched on 10 November for a three-month period to tackle the humanitarian needs of the country. DHA is tracking financial contributions against the requirements set out in the appeal.

Food distribution underway in Brazzaville

WFP today (Wednesday) started food deliveries in Brazzaville, the first distribution since the end of the five-month civil war. A WFP press release said food was being handed out to some 20,000 people still affected by the conflict. The food consignments were taken by boat from Kinshasa across the Congo river, and will be distributed by Catholic Relief Services and Caritas. The statement said about 60 percent of the capital's population had returned to the city and faced acute food shortages and outbreak of disease.

UGANDA: Eight killed in rebel attack

At least eight civilians were killed by rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the western Kabarole district on Monday, the 'Monitor' newspaper reported yesterday. It quoted local officials as saying the villages of Nkoma and Kibaale came under attack, causing residents to flee. The villages are located 16 km from an army camp.

Nairobi, 19 November 1997, 14:10 gmt

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IRIN Update No. 296 for Central and Eastern Africa (Thursday 20 November 1997)

RWANDA: 300 killed in jail battle

About 300 people died earlier this week in a battle that ensued after Hutu rebels tried to free inmates from a prison in northwest Gisenyi prefecture, BBC radio reported today (Thursday). The jail, in Giciye, was holding prisoners awaiting trial in connection with the 1994 genocide. The BBC quoted the Rwandan authorities as saying some 1,200 militiamen took part in the attack. Eighty-eight prisoners died and the army says it killed around 200 rebels. Ninety-three inmates reportedly escaped. Speaking to IRIN, Emmanuel Gasana, an adviser to Vice-President and Defence Minister Paul Kagame, described the clash as a "very major battle" which lasted several hours. He said many people were involved in "this kind of terrorist activity" in the area. "There has to be a military solution and it will be very soon," he added. According to Rwandan media sources, the prison was badly damaged by artillery fire although it was unclear whether this came from the rebels or the army. Mopping-up operations were still continuing, the army said today. The government has estimated some 15,000 rebels are active in northwest Rwanda.

At least 20 killed in rebel attack

In another incident, at least 20 civilians were killed when rebels attacked a settlement near Mukamira village in neighbouring Ruhengeri prefecture on Tuesday night. The Rwanda News Agency described the victims as Tutsi returnees from 1994. It said machetes, clubs and small hoes were used in the raid. According to AFP, a defence ministry source described the attack as "swift", saying the rebels managed to escape before troops arrived on the scene. Mukamira is close to the Gishwati forest which serves as a base for rebel operations, and local villagers are believed to be sympathetic to the guerrillas, AFP said.

ICTR asks Dallaire to testify

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha yesterday requested the testimony of General Romeo Dallaire, the former commander of the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), as a witness in the case of Jean-Paul Akayesu. The latter was the former mayor of Taba commune in Gitarama prefecture, and faces various charges of genocide and crimes against humanity. According to an ICTR press release, Akayesu's defence counsel argues that Dallaire's testimony is of paramount importance to the case. Dallaire's appearance in court has to be authorised by the UN Secretary-General.

"Re-education" camps closed

The Rwandan authorities have closed the five last remaining "re-education" camps for repatriated Hutu refugees, AFP reported. The camps were used for some 44,000 people who returned home at the end of 1996 and who wanted to return to their former jobs. The government felt repatriated people needed "detoxification" after their years as refugees, AFP said. The coordinator of one of the camps told AFP that "graduates had all been re-employed".

ICRC distributes photo albums of separated children

ICRC, helped by UNICEF, is distributing 2,500 copies of a photo album containing 440 pictures of children in a bid to reunite them with their families. The albums will be sent to churches, municipal offices and NGOs throughout Rwanda in the hope that families will come forward. Most of the children are aged between one and four years of age.

BURUNDI: Bagaza to go on trial for alleged Buyoya murder plot

Former president Jean-Baptiste Bagaza is to go on trial next week on charges of plotting to kill Burundi's current leader Pierre Buyoya, BBC radio reported, citing the country's justice minister. Bagaza, who has been under house arrest for several months, is due to be tried by a military court. He leads the hardline Tutsi party, Parti pour le redressement national (PARENA), which is opposed to Buyoya's attempts to negotiate with the rebel Conseil National pour la defense de la democratie (CNDD). He was overthrown by a military coup in 1987 when Buyoya came to power for the first time.

Eight killed in rebel "shooting spree"

Eight civilians were killed and six wounded in a rebel attack on a village just north of Bujumbura, Reuters reported. According to an army spokesman, the raid was launched Sunday night on Mutara village when rebels "went on a shooting spree".

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: No decision taken on Francophonie - Kabila

President Laurent-Desire Kabila has stressed his country's continued participation in the Francophonie, contrary to statements at the weekend in which he declared the DRC was withdrawing from the French-speaking community. According to Radio France Internationale, he said no official stand had been taken on the issue. Kabila reiterated the re-establishment of democracy in DRC, saying the ban on political parties should occur before 1999. A special commission had already been established to write the new constitution and the "franc congolais" would be in circulation before the year-end, he stated.

Mugabe says world seeking to "demonise" Kabila

Southern African leaders, attending a trade summit in Botswana, yesterday pledged their continued support for Kabila. President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and his Mozambican counterpart Joaquim Chissano said Kabila needed the support of the international community for the stability of his country, PANA news agency reported. Mugabe accused the international community of seeking to "demonise" Kabila without acknowledging the immense challenges faced by the DRC. While noting the importance of the UN probe into alleged human rights violations, Mugabe said Kabila should be seen as a "saviour of the people", rather than a "devil". UN spokesman Fred Eckhard told a news briefing the UN team might leave for the field early next week.

Eastern Kasai governor and deputy suspended

The governor of Eastern Kasai and his deputy have been suspended from their duties, DRC radio broadcasting from Bukavu said yesterday. The decision, taken by the interior minister, followed "open conflict between the two authorities which risked hindering the smooth running of the province," the radio reported. Last week, DRC radio said Kabila had accused some officials of abusing their positions.

UGANDA: Cooperation with DRC to rout rebels

The state-owned 'New Vision' today reported the Ugandan and DRC authorities were cooperating in the fight against rebels of the Allied Democratic Front, based in the Rwenzori mountains straddling the two countries. It quoted State Minister for Defence Amama Mbabazi as saying the current heavy rains were now a major problem for the rebels.

KENYA: Moi declares more areas disaster zones

President Daniel arap Moi has declared Northeastern province and the Marsabit and Moyale districts of Eastern province, devastated by floods, as disaster zones. Torrential rains have caused loss of live and destroyed property and infrastructure in the regions. Last month, Coastal province was also declared a disaster zone after areas were battered by storms.

GREAT LAKES: Donor contributions

Donors have contributed nearly half a billion US dollars to humanitarian programmes in the Great Lakes region in 1997. Of a total of $498 million, $279 million went towards UN programmes. The United States and the European Commission's ECHO together account for about half of the finance. DHA's Financial Tracking Unit in Geneva, in its latest update on the region, reports that funds received for programmes specifically for Rwanda account for $115.3 million, despite not formally being included in the UN's Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal. In 1996, $629 million was given by donors for humanitarian work in the Great Lakes.

Nairobi, 20 November 1997, 14:00 gmt

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[The weekly roundup is based on IRIN daily updates and other relevant information from UN agencies, NGOs, governments, donors and the media. IRIN issues these reports for the benefit of the humanitarian community, but accepts no responsibility as to the accuracy of the original sources.]

Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Weekly Round-up 31-97 covering the period 14-20 Nov 1997

RWANDA: 300 killed in jail battle

About 300 people died earlier this week in a battle that ensued after Hutu rebels tried to free inmates from a prison in northwest Gisenyi prefecture. The jail, in Giciye, was holding prisoners awaiting trial in connection with the 1994 genocide. The Rwandan authorities said some 1,200 militiamen took part in the attack. Eighty-eight prisoners died and the army says it killed around 200 rebels. Ninety-three inmates reportedly escaped. Army operations were continuing on Wednesday around the nearby Gishwati forest where the raiders are believed to be based. Giciye was also the scene of a rebel raid on a market last Thursday which claimed more than 30 lives.

In another incident, at least 20 civilians died when rebels hit a settlement near Mukamira village in neighbouring Ruhengeri prefecture on Tuesday night. The victims were mainly Tutsi returnees from 1994. The attackers managed to escape into the Gishwati forest before troops arrived on the scene. The government has estimated some 15,000 rebels are active in northwest Rwanda. In recent weeks, tracts urging Hutu armed struggle and the massacre or expulsion of Tutsis have begun appearing in the region.

ICTR asks Dallaire to testify

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha has requested the testimony of General Romeo Dallaire, the former commander of the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), as a witness in the case of Jean-Paul Akayesu. The latter was the former mayor of Taba commune in Gitarama prefecture, and faces various charges of genocide and crimes against humanity. Dallaire's appearance in court has to be authorised by the UN Secretary-General. On Monday, the first defence witness to testify at the tribunal argued that Akayesu had been powerless to prevent ethnic massacres in his region and had initially done everything he could to prevent the killings. The unnamed witness was brought from detention in Rwanda to give evidence.

Biya authorises transfer of two genocide suspects

Cameroon's President Paul Biya has authorised the transfer of two Rwandans to the ICTR. Both suspects, Laurent Semanza and Jean Bosco Barayagwiza, are accused of calling for the massacre of Tutsis at public meetings, distributing weapons and money to the Interahamwe militia, and of ordering and organising genocidal slaughter. In 1994, Semanza was mayor of Bicumbi, a town east of Kigali, and regional president of the then-ruling MRND party. Barayagwiza was director of political affairs in the ministry of foreign affairs.

UN Special Representative calls for dossiers for detainees

The Special Representative of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Rwanda has urged the international community to concentrate on providing all necessary assistance to enable the government to establish urgently a dossier for every detainee. In his latest report, Michel Moussali, said this would allow "for the determination of who should be released immediately and who should be brought to trial within the shortest time possible".

"Re-education" camps closed

The Rwandan authorities have closed the five last remaining "re-education" camps for repatriated Hutu refugees. The camps were used for some 44,000 people who came home at the end of 1996 and who wanted to return to their former jobs. The government felt repatriated people needed "detoxification" after their years as refugees. The coordinator of one of the camps told AFP that "graduates had all been re-employed".

Alert over arrested Rwandan journalist

Reporters sans frontieres and the freedom of expression group IFEX have issued an alert over the fate of Rwandan journalist Joseph Habyarimana. Habyarimana, editor of the magazine 'Indorerwamo', was arrested on 28 October allegedly over an article published in the 'Intego' newspaper in December which highlighted pressures on local officials to arrest Hutus accused of taking part in the 1994 genocide. The article ended with an appeal for ethnic conciliation.

BURUNDI: UNHCR notes difficult access to Burundians expelled from DRC

UNHCR said some 2,000 Hutus expelled from Democratic Republic of Congo over the past two weeks had arrived in Burundi's combat zones where the agency was unable to gain access to most of them. Rwandan and DRC Hutus were thrown out, along with the Burundians, from around Uvira and Bukavu in eastern DRC. Burundian and Rwandan troops were involved in the operation, humanitarian sources told IRIN. Bujumbura has however denied knowledge of any forced repatriation to northwestern Cibitoke and Bubanza provinces. The DRC government has described those being expelled as "infiltrators" and a threat to security. UNHCR also reported a new influx of refugees into Rwanda fleeing continued fighting in Cibitoke. Several dozen Burundians and over 1,000 Rwandans had arrived in Rwanda over the past week. According to UNHCR, some of the Rwandans claimed they were expelled.

In a separate development, the Tanzanian army has arrested or deported more than 28,000 illegal aliens since September in a security crackdown along its western Kigoma and Ngara border regions. According to UNHCR, most of those arrested were Burundians or Congolese. Also included in the sweep were old-caseload Rwandan refugees.

Bagaza to go on trial for alleged Buyoya murder plot

Former president Jean-Baptiste Bagaza is to go on trial before a military court next week on charges of plotting to kill Burundi's current leader Pierre Buyoya, BBC radio reported. Bagaza has been under house arrest for several months. He leads the hardline Tutsi party, Parti pour le redressement national (PARENA), which is opposed to Buyoya's attempts to negotiate with the rebel Conseil National pour la defense de la democratie (CNDD). He was overthrown by a military coup in 1987 when Buyoya came to power for the first time.

Buyoya rejects claims of involvement in 1993 coup plot

Meanwhile, Buyoya has dismissed claims of involvement in the 1993 attempted military coup in which President Melchior Ndadaye was killed. A statement issued by the presidency stressed that no report had ever implicated Buyoya in the coup plot. The allegation was made over the BBC's Kirundi service by Lieutenant Jean-Paul Kamana, who is accused of being one of the main coup plotters. The official statement said the claim was a lie "instigated by circles opposed to the government".

31 killed in separate attacks

Fourteen employees of a tea factory in Buhoro in the troubled province of Cibitoke were killed by rebels on Sunday night, according to an interior ministry statement. In another rebel attack, eight people were killed and six wounded in Mutimbuzi, 15 km north of Bujumbura, on Saturday. At least nine people were killed and 10 wounded when an armed gang carried out an attack last Thursday night at Kinyami in Cibitoke, state radio reported. The radio identified the attackers as belonging to the "Benjamin" group, an off-shoot of CNDD. The gang is believed responsible for the killing of 50 civilians in Cibitoke since last month.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Mugabe says world seeking to "demonise" Kabila

Southern African leaders, attending a trade summit in Botswana pledged their continued support for President Laurent-Desire Kabila. Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and his Mozambican counterpart Joaquim Chissano said Kabila needed the support of the international community for the stability of his country, PANA news agency reported. Mugabe accused the international community of seeking to "demonise" Kabila without acknowledging the immense challenges faced by the DRC. Last week, South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo made a similar appeal. Meanwhile, UN spokesman Fred Eckhard told a news briefing the UN human rights investigation team might leave for the field early next week. The mission has yet to meet with the government's liaison committee to agree the modalities of deployment.

In a fresh attack on UN Special Rapporteur Roberto Garreton, Kinshasa last Friday urged the UN to withdraw his human rights report on the country, saying it sought to "sabotage" the UN investigation. In a letter to the UN Secretary-General, DRC's UN envoy Andre Mwanba Kapanga described the report as a "deliberate act aimed at sabotaging" the enquiry. The report described the human rights situation in DRC under Kabila as "less than satisfactory".

No decision taken on Francophonie - Kabila

Kabila has stressed his country's continued participation in the Francophonie, contrary to statements at the weekend in which he declared the DRC was withdrawing from the French-speaking community. According to Radio France Internationale, he said no official stand had been taken on the issue. Kabila reiterated the re-establishment of democracy in DRC, saying the ban on political parties should be lifted before 1999. A special commission had already been established to write the new constitution and the "franc congolais" would be in circulation before the year-end, he stated.

Eastern Kasai governor and deputy suspended

The governor of Eastern Kasai and his deputy have been suspended from their duties. The decision, taken by the interior minister, followed "open conflict between the two authorities which risked hindering the smooth running of the province," DRC radio reported.

Newspaper editor to be freed

Kabila has decided that the editor of the opposition 'Phare' newspaper should be released from detention, according to DRC television. Luboyayi Polydor was detained two months ago for an article in his paper alleging Kabila was creating a presidential guard, similar to the Division Speciale Presidentielle (DSP) of former president Mobutu.

UGANDA: Cooperation with DRC to rout rebels

The state-owned 'New Vision' on Thursday reported the Ugandan and DRC authorities were cooperating in the fight against rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), based in the Rwenzori mountains straddling the two countries. It quoted State Minister for Defence Amama Mbabazi as saying the current heavy rains were now a major problem for the rebels. At least eight civilians were killed by the ADF on Monday in the western Kabarole district.

Donors pledge $750 million to Uganda

Donor nations have pledged about $750 million in aid to Uganda for the 1998 tax year and praised the government for its economic discipline, the World Bank said on Thursday. The bank had also announced the aid would include $320 million in quickly-disbursed budget support while the rest would be split among project and programme aid handed out as concessional loans and grants. James Adams, the World Bank's country director for Uganda, told a news conference donors were urging the government to make greater efforts to control corruption and had expressed worries over the high levels of defence spending.

According to a recent ICRC report, some 30,000 displaced are returning to their villages in the West Nile area. Thousands of Ugandan refugees have also arrived home from DRC and Sudan.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Sassou Nguesso plans transitional parliament

President Denis Sassou Nguesso has proposed a "peace and reconciliation" forum for next month in Brazzaville which will act as a transitional parliament. Former president Pascal Lissouba and his political allies will not be invited to attend. In an interview on Gabonese Africa No 1 radio Sassou Nguesso said the "forces for peace" inside the country would participate in the forum. Militiamen loyal to Sassou Nguesso fired into the air on Sunday in a demonstration to demand their inclusion in the national army. "We are shooting to make the military authorities understand that we want to get into barracks, like some of our comrades," an unidentified militiaman told government radio.

Food distribution underway in Brazzaville

WFP started food deliveries in Brazzaville on Wednesday, the first distribution since the end of the five-month civil war. A WFP press release said food was being handed out to some 20,000 people still affected by the conflict by Catholic Relief Services and Caritas. The statement said the capital's population faces acute food shortages and outbreak of disease.

ANGOLA: UN halts demobilisation in Jamba

The UN is halting the demobilisation of troops from the former rebel movement UNITA in the southern town of Jamba following an assault on two UN staff. A Zambian soldier and a UN employee handling the reintegration of civilians were wounded last Wednesday by UNITA supporters, AFP said. The UN announced it had lodged a strong protest with UNITA.

KENYA: Moi declares more areas disaster zones

President Daniel arap Moi has declared Northeastern province and the Marsabit and Moyale districts of Eastern province, devastated by floods, as disaster zones. Torrential rains have caused loss of life and destroyed property and infrastructure in the regions. Thousands of Kenyans face starvation because food supplies cannot reach the flood-hit areas, local officials say. Last month, Coastal province was also declared a disaster zone after areas were battered by storms.

UNITED NATIONS: De Mello new Emergency Relief Coordinator

Sergio Vieira de Mello has been appointed as the new UN Emergency Relief Coordinator. His appointment takes effect on 1 January 1998. "I hope to contribute modestly my field experience in humanitarian and peace-keeping operations to strengthening the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator", de Mello said after his posting was announced in New York last Friday. De Mello, a Brazilian national, is presently serving as the UN Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees. He will succeed Yasushi Akashi as Emergency Relief Coordinator.

GREAT LAKES: Donor contributions

Donors have contributed nearly half a billion US dollars to humanitarian programmes in the Great Lakes region in 1997. Of a total of $498 million, $279 million went towards UN programmes. The United States and the European Commission's ECHO together account for about half of the finance. DHA's Financial Tracking Unit in Geneva, in its latest update on the region, reports that funds received for programmes specifically for Rwanda account for $115.3 million, despite not formally being included in the UN's Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal. In 1996, $629 million was given by donors for humanitarian work in the Great Lakes.

Nairobi, November 21 1997, 11:00 gmt

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Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Update 298, 11/24/97

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IRIN Update No. 298 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 22-24 November 1997)

RWANDA: Giciye reported calm after heavy fighting

The Rwanda news agency (RNA) said the town of Giciye, in Gisenyi prefecture, was now calm after fierce fighting erupted there last week following a rebel attempt to storm the local prison. The building was completely destroyed, RNA added. In an interview with Radio France Internationale over the weekend, military spokesman Richard Sezibera said the rebels had no bases in the country. "They pretend to be civilians during the day, and at night they organise and attack," he stated. The authorities were trying to "politically educate" local people to reject the rebels. "We think this education, coupled with military operations, will yield some fruit," Sezibera said. It was possible the rebels had rear bases in the Democratic Repubic of Congo, but the armies of the two countries were cooperating to combat them, he added.

No need to cross into DRC yet, Kagame says

Vice-President Paul Kagame also stressed his country was cooperating with the DRC. According to AFP, he told the French daily 'Le Figaro' there was no reason "at the moment" for the Rwandan army to cross the border in pursuit of "genocidal militia" and ex-FAR soldiers who he blamed for the insecurity in northwest Rwanda.

BURUNDI: Tanzania expels government representative

Tension between Burundi and Tanzania increased over the weekend after Dar es Salaam expelled the Burundi government's only representative. The Burundi authorities on Friday expressed "deep indignation" over the expulsion of Clavera Maregeya, saying she was "arrested by six men before dawn in front of her children". A government statement said the envoy had been the victim of "inhuman and demeaning treatment". The Burundi embassy in Dar es Salaam is staffed by exiled members of the opposition Front pour la democratie au Burundi (FRODEBU) who are not recognised by the Burundi government.

FROLINA announces resumption of military operations

A Tanzania-based Burundi rebel organisation, the Front pour la liberation nationale (FROLINA), says its armed wing has "resumed" military operations in Burundi. In a press release, FROLINA said the decision followed an 18-month ceasefire declared unilaterally to give international mediation efforts a chance to succeed. FROLINA said its military offensive, launched on 27 October, "lies within the final phase of the liberation of the Burundian people". It claimed its People's Armed Forces (PAF) occupied military barracks in the southern Burundi areas of Kabonga, Mugina and Mukerezi.

Bagaza formally charged with Buyoya murder plot

Former president Jean-Baptiste Bagaza has been formally charged with plotting to kill the current leader Major Pierre Buyoya, AFP reported. It quoted a source from the state military prosecution as saying Bagaza, who leads the hardline Tutsi Parti pour le redressement national (PARENA), was accused of "plotting against the life of the head of state and the illegal possession of weapons". PARENA Secretary-General Cyrille Barancira denied the existence of a plan to assassinate Buyoya. Speaking to AFP, he also charged there were "political motives" to the detention of Bagaza, who has been under house arrest since January.

Karuzi regroupment camps should be empty by year-end

The governor of Karuzi province, Colonel Gabriel Gunungu, has said all regroupment camps in the province will probably be closed by the end of the year. He told the Agence burundaise de presse (ABP) that until the first half of 1996, which he described as the height of the crisis caused by civil war, the province registered 120,000 regrouped people, mostly in the Gihogazi, Bugenyuzi and Gitaramuka communes. Of these 50,000 had already returned to their collines, and the remaining 70,000 were now going home.

KENYA: Thousands of refugees at risk as storms batter camps

According to Kenyan press reports, heavy rains battering northeast Kenya risked leaving thousands of refugees homeless as camps in Garissa district were submerged. Structures in the Dadaab camps of Ifo and Hadgera were flattened by floodwater. The nearby camp of Dagahaley was dry but completely surrounded by water, the 'Sunday Nation' reported. The three camps house some 120,000 Somali, Sudanese and Ethiopian refugees. Water levels are still rising, heightening fears of starvation and epidemic, Kenyan television said. According to the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS), up to 10 times more rain than normal for October has fallen in the usually-arid northeast. Mandera recorded more rain in October than the entire annual average.

UGANDA: Nearly 30 killed in floods and landslides

Meanwhile, nearly 30 people were killed by landslides and floods due to heavy rains in eastern Uganda. Local officials, quoted by Ugandan radio yesterday (Sunday), said 29 people had lost their lives in the Bulucheke and Bunika areas of Manjiya county in Mbale district. Bridges had been washed away and communications cut. A rescue operation was underway by the Ugandan Red Cross, police and local villagers. The 'New Vision' daily on Saturday reported that western Uganda had also been hit by torrential rain. Hundreds of travellers were stranded along the Fort Portal-Mubende murram road.

Uganda deploying troops on Sudan border

Uganda is deploying additional troops along its border with Sudan, according to the state-owned 'New Vision'. The newspaper reported on Saturday that troops were being sent to the border in a bid to prevent infiltration by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Sudanese officials charged that Uganda was planning an invasion of the south. The daily 'Al-Rai al-Akher' quoted South Sudan Coordination Council chairman Riak Machar and Arok Thon Arok of the pro-government United Democratic Salvation Front as saying the Ugandan army command was shifting from Kampala to Gulu in the north.

SUDAN: Eritrea accused of preventing refugee return

Sudan's commissioner for refugees on Sunday accused Eritrea of refusing to allow the repatriation of Eritrean refugees, AFP reported. Mohamed al-Sheikh Abdul Aal claimed the Asmara authorities were not allowing the return of refugees who had expressed a desire to go home. He added Sudan was willing to take back its own refugees, many of whom are in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. Meanwhile, former rebel leader Lam Akol announced on Sunday he had accepted a nomination for governor of Upper Nile state.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: UNHCR to resume repatriation from Tanzania

UNHCR announced today (Monday) it would resume the repatriation of DRC refugees from Tanzania in accordance with a tripartite agreement adopted by the three sides in August. In a statement it said its decision had been motivated by the refugees' desire to go home. The announcement follows a visit to Tanzania by DRC's Minister for Reconstruction and Emergency Planning Richard Mbaya for discussions on the issue. DRC television described his talks with Tanzanian officials as very positive. A joint statement issued at the end of the visit stressed commitment to the tripartite agreement signed with UNHCR.

Bank governor says revenue boosted

By centralising collection and simplifying tax legislation, DRC Central Bank Governor Jean-Claude Masangu Mulongo says his country has managed to boost revenues significantly. "We have basically doubled our revenue stream to $52 million per month from roughly $25 million by changing the methodology of paying tax and diminishing the temptation to corruption," he told the 'Financial Times' in an interview published on Saturday. The governor stressed that 80 percent of the economy remained in the "informal sector". "It's a very difficult task bringing that 80 percent into the formal market," the paper quoted him as saying.

Kabila visits Namibia to urge investment

President Laurent-Desire Kabila visited Windhoek on Sunday for talks with Namibian leader Sam Nujoma and local businessmen. According to the South African news agency SAPA, Kabila urged investment in his country. He said the DRC was moving towards economic recovery, but reconstruction demanded investment in all areas.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Red Cross volunteer killed by militiamen

A local Red Cross volunteer was shot dead in Brazzaville on Saturday by a group of militiamen who opened fire on his vehicle. Two other people were wounded. An ICRC statement said about 50 volunteers were travelling in a lorry bearing the Red Cross emblem when they came under fire. A spokesman for the organisation said it was not known why the militiamen attacked the Red Cross vehicle.

Lissouba militia given deadline to disarm

The new Congolese authorities have given militiamen loyal to ousted president Pascal Lissouba two weeks to hand in their weapons. Government spokesman Francois Ibovi said on Saturday those who did not comply would be liable to "penalties provided for by laws and regulations". He did not elaborate. He added that pro-government Cobra militiamen and others "who fought Lissouba's genocidal regime" would be incorporated into the armed forces. Ibovi also announced that all foreign diplomats close to the former government would be removed because they were responsible for "disinformation" regarding the new rulers.

TANZANIA: East African military chiefs agree to boost defence ties

Top military chiefs from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania met in Arusha last week for talks on defence-related issues within the East African Cooperation (EAC), the Kenyan 'Daily Nation' reported on Friday. A joint statement described the meeting between General Daudi Tonje of Kenya, General Robert Philemon Mboma of Tanzania and General Mugisha Muntu of Uganda as the first of its kind in the post-independence history of the three countries. The three armed forces leaders proposed increased defence cooperation, joint training and security and coordination of defence-related issues.

GREAT LAKES: Salim suggests discussion on improving relations with UNHCR

OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim has proposed a consultative meeting next year to address strained relations between UNHCR and some governments in the Great Lakes region. Describing the current state of affairs as "unsatisfactory", Salim said the OAU would cooperate with UNHCR to seek "an amicable and acceptable solution." In a statement to a session of the OAU's conflict resolution body last week, Salim said that while UNHCR should be able to implement its mandate to assist refugees, the political and security concerns of countries of asylum and origin "deserve proper consideration." The meeting meanwhile concluded by endorsing Ethiopian Premier Meles Zenawi's call for a new investigation into the 1994 Rwandan genocide to stop it happening again. In comments to the meeting last week, Meles warned the fallout from the genocide was still "potent and pregnant with disaster".

Primates threatened with extinction, WWF warns

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has warned that war and poaching are threatening the survival of Africa's great apes. In a statement issued in Nairobi, the WWF said the mountain gorilla, living in the war zone between Rwanda, DRC and Uganda, was the primate most immediately threatened, due to deforestation and a collapse of infrastructures. Long-haired chimpanzees in Burundi and Rwanda were also at risk for their meat due to famine and widespread insecurity. The WWF appealed to the international community to act before it was too late.

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Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Update 299, 11/25/97

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IRIN Update No. 299 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 25 November 1997)

BURUNDI: Thousands displaced as army battles rebels in south

The Burundi army announced 103 rebels were killed and ammunition seized in an operation mounted by the security forces in the southern Bururi province. Speaking over Burundi radio yesterday (Monday), military spokesman Colonel Isaie Nibizi said the operation was carried out over the weekend along the Dama river between the communes of Buyengero and Burambi. Two soldiers were slightly wounded. "Events are progressing positively," he said. WFP reported over 10,000 people had been displaced by recent fighting in Buyengero commune, fleeing ongoing rebel activities and military operations in the surrounding hills and forests. It said they were completely destitute, sleeping rough under trees or in the local church.

Pressure mounts for lifting sanctions

The chairman of the Eastern and Southern Africa Business Organisation (ESABO) has called on the regional economic grouping COMESA to lift the embargo on Burundi because of the "devastating consequences" for member states, PANA news agency reported yesterday. Kassim Owango said that while members of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) had stopped trading with Burundi, other business competitors such as China and South Africa had taken over the market. Earlier this month, COMESA itself described the sanctions as futile and urged an end to the embargo. The human rights organisation, International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, ended a conference in Senegal yesterday with a call for lifting economic sanctions.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: UN team still waiting in Kinshasa

The UN team investigating allegations of human rights violations in DRC is still in Kinshasa. Spokesman Jose Diaz told IRIN the mission was still waiting for the "technical meeting" with DRC leaders to take place. The government had not yet indicated when the meeting might be held, he said. Team leaders have been waiting to meet government representatives to discuss the logistics of the mission including security in the field, without which the investigation cannot take place. A meeting planned earlier this month was postponed.

Editor arrested for "spying" for UN

The DRC authorities have arrested a newspaper editor for allegedly "spying" for the UN mission. Bonsange Yema, managing editor of the 'Mambenga', 'Essor Africain' and 'l'Alarme' newspapers, was arrested in Kisangani on 18 November, according to 'l'Alarme'. The newspaper said the human rights group Avocats Sans Frontieres (ASF) called on Interior Minister Mwenze Kongolo to order the "unconditional release" of Bonsange. ASF was reported as saying it had received "more and more alarming reports about the situation of human rights activists, aid workers and journalists in the east of the country". Meanwhile, another detained newspaper editor, Polydor Muboyayi Mubanga, of 'Le Phare' was released last week.

Authorities worried by growing insecurity in the Kivus

Security in the Kivus is again giving cause for concern, according to the official Agence congolaise de presse (ACP). Quoting businessmen in Bukavu, it said Lake Kivu remained the only secure channel for commercial trade between North and South Kivu. Road travel between Goma and Bukavu was particularly risky in the Minova area due to the presence of Mai-Mai fighters "who do not want to see anyone of Nilotic extraction in their way", the news agency reported. It added the South Kivu governor had noted that while some Mai-Mai had been integrated into the regular army, others had allied themselves with Interahamwe militia and ex-FAR members. The Lugushwa and Kitutu areas in the Mwenga zone of South Kivu had recently been subjected to acts of violence by Mai-Mai forces.

Ugandan rebels reportedly control border area

ACP also quoted local officials as saying the Banyangala area of Ruwenzori in North Kivu was under the control of National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) rebels. It said the rebels were taking advantage of the absence of the DRC army in the area, where the Ugandan shilling is the currency in use. The North Kivu governor has given local people, thought to be associated with NALU rebels, two weeks to turn themselves in before the start of military "clean-up" operation planned for the Ruwenzori area. NALU is thought to come under the umbrella of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) who are active in western Uganda.

UGANDA: Cooperation with DRC in routing rebels

The state-owned 'New Vision' newspaper reported today (Tuesday) the DRC and Ugandan armies would launch a joint military operation to fight rebels along their common border. Military commanders from the two countries toured the western Ugandan districts of Kabarole, Kasese and Bundibugyo where ADF rebels have been carrying out attacks. The Ugandan army claims the rebels are able to stage raids on border areas by passing through sparsely-populated parts of eastern DRC.

More die in floods

The death toll from severe flooding in the eastern Mbale district has risen to 35, the 'New Vision' reported yesterday. Bridges have been swept away, and electricity and running water supplies disrupted.

TANZANIA: UNICEF concerned over Burundian round-up

UNICEF in Tanzania has expressed concern over the situation of Burundian women and children who are being rounded up by the Tanzanian authorities and taken to refugee camps in the Kigoma and Kagera regions. It said families, who had been living in villages in the region for some 20

years, were being separated as a result of the operation. UNICEF stated it was assessing cases of rights violations against children and women, who were Tanzanian by law, but had been treated as illegal immigrants. According to an article in the 'EastAfrican' weekly, the Tanzanian government had denied there was deliberate operation to expel Burundians from the country, saying the exercise was a "military surveillance" of border areas for "security reasons". The weekly quoted a US diplomat as saying the move had "grossly marred" Tanzania's position as a peace-broker in the Burundi crisis.

Government denies Burundian government envoy expelled

Tanzanian Interior Minister Ali Amer Mohammed denied his government had expelled the Burundi government's only representative in the country. In an interview with the BBC's Kirundi service, he claimed Clavera Maregeya was asked to leave the country after the authorities discovered she had no accreditation. The minister also denied reports she had been manhandled by policemen who went to arrest her.

Cholera deaths on the rise

The daily 'Uhuru' newspaper reported yesterday at least 26 people died of cholera in the southern Tanzanian region of Mtwara between 10-16 November. The regional medical officer of Mtwara, Jamal Mbaya, was quoted as saying the latest deaths brought to 254 the number of people killed by cholera in the area during the past six months. In the central Singida district, 11 people had died of the disease out of 157 who contracted it. AFP said cholera had also resurfaced in Dar es Salaam, where some 56 people had been admitted to hospital since August.

SUDAN: Garang in Egypt

Sudanese rebel leader John Garang arrived in Cairo yesterday on his first visit to Egypt since becoming leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), AFP reported. It quoted a spokesman for the Sudanese opposition National Democratic Alliance as saying Garang was on a weeklong visit aimed at explaining the SPLA position to Egyptian leaders. The spokesman, Faruq Abu al-Issa, admitted Garang's call for a confederation in Sudan "raised concern in Egypt" which was opposed to division of the country, but stressed the visit would "help clear the air".He added that contacts were underway for Garang to visit other Arab countries which have expressed concern over the separation of state and religion and self-determination for southern Sudan. Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha meanwhile told parliament yesterday his country was taking steps to normalise ties with Egypt. These measures would be announced "in the very near future", he said.

Nairobi, 25 November 1997, 14:00 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Update No. 301 for Central and Eastern Africa (Thursday 27 November 1997)

RWANDA: Minister tells Tanzanians refugee expulsions "deplorable"

Rwandan Education Minister Joseph Karemera, who led an official team to Tanzania earlier this month for discussions on the expulsion of Rwandan refugees, described the deportations as "deplorable". Rwandan radio recalled that over 1,800 Rwandans - many of whom had been in Tanzania for years - were thrown out by authorities some three months ago. Karemera said he was told by the Tanzanian authorities the intention was to deport "troublemakers" but the order was incorrectly implemented at local level. According to the radio, the minister stressed relations with Tanzania were "as a rule, marked by excellent mutual understanding". "I do not see why such incidents should happen again," he stated. A meeting was planned for 3 December between the two countries' defence and interior ministers to try and resolve the problem.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Refugees due home from Tanzania on Friday

Six hundred DRC refugees are due to leave the western Tanzanian port of Kigoma today (Thursday) at the start of a resumed repatriation operation. They should arrive in Uvira tomorrow (Friday). Over 40,000 refugees have registered to return home, according to UNHCR Tanzania. The repatriation exercise was put on hold in September after UNHCR expressed concerns over security in eastern DRC. Humanitarian sources described the current situation in Uvira as calm with shops and businesses reopening and more goods available in the markets.

UN mission meets Kabila

The UN mission investigating alleged human rights abuses met President Laurent-Desire Kabila today. Mission spokesman Jose Diaz told Reuters Kabila had assured investigators of the government's full cooperation, and they were now waiting to hear from the UN in New York. After over two months of wrangling, the DRC authorities yesterday gave the team the go-ahead to go "where they want". UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said yesterday the world body was hopeful this would be the "final okay" to get into the field. However, some "logistical matters" remained unresolved, he added.

Albright to visit region next month

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is due to arrive in Kinshasa on 12 December as part of a tour of Africa. The one-week tour from 9-15 December will take in Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa and Zimbabwe. A State Department spokesman said the trip would focus on "advancing US interests in the Great Lakes region, justice and the rule of law, stability and economic opportunity".

Army counter-insurgency body created

A counter-insurgency body has been set up within the DRC army, DRC radio, broadcasting from Bukavu, reported. Speaking over the radio, a South Kivu military commander stressed the new body - known as the Detection Militaire des Anti-Patrie (DEMIAP) - would only concern itself with the army. "It has nothing to do with the civilian population, the arrest of civilians or confiscation of property," he said.

Army chief reportedly arrested over disagreements with Kabila

Radio France Internationale said an official of the security service had confirmed the arrest on Wednesday of acting army chief-of-staff Major Masasu Nindaga. It said his office was surrounded by hundreds of soldiers and all cellular phones of his close friends had been confiscated. The radio pointed out no reasons had been given for the arrest of Masasu, who was reportedly very close to Kabila during the liberation war and also vice-president of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL).

Senior political analysts told IRIN Masasu, 28, was arrested after reportedly falling out with Kabila over the handling of the Mai-Mai rebellion in eastern DRC. They say his arrest and incarceration could "have grave consequences for the future of the alliance". His detention follows the reported sidelining of ADFL Secretary-General Deogratias Bugera, a founding member of the Banyamulenge-led Democratic Alliance of the People (ADP) and in the days immediately after the defeat of former president Mobutu Sese Seko, the second most influential man in the country. Masasu, whose Rwandan Tutsi mother fled the pogroms of the late-1950s, joined the Rwandan Patriotic Army in 1993 before becoming a frontline commander in the fight to overthrow Mobutu. His father, a leading member of the Bashi ethnic grouping, is an influential figure in the region around Uvira.

Kabila pledges cooperation with neighbours

President Kabila pledged cooperation with other regional partners, stressing DRC would "never enter into conflict with its neighbours". DRC radio in Bunia, citing a press release, today said Kabila affirmed his country would promote development in central and southern Africa. He spoke of exploiting oil deposits in Lake Albert and Lake Edward on the Ugandan border and constructing a railway linking the Great Lakes region. The projects would be financed by credit lines from Namibia, Kabila said.

UGANDA: Babies reportedly killed by rebels

At least 14 people were massacred by rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army near the northern Ugandan town of Gulu yesterday, the state-owned 'New Vision' reported today. It quoted army commander Brigadier James Kazini as saying the incident occurred at dawn near the river Ayugi in Pabo. Seven of the victims reportedly were babies aged under one. Most of the victims were hacked to death and their bodies strewn along the roads, the newspaper added.

KENYA: World Bank releases funds to combat water hyacinth

Nearly 3,000 hectares of Lake Victoria, the largest fresh water reservoir in Africa, is covered with the water hyacinth weed which poses a severe threat to fisheries and lake transportation. The World Bank has set aside US$ 77 million for the first phase of a five-year programme for research into the lake involving Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, PANA news agency reported. The money would be used for researching fisheries, water quality, management of the wetlands and the environment. The lake is essential for east Africans who are dependent on its waters for their livelihood.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Clean water restored to parts of capital

Clean water supplies were restored to parts of Brazzaville yesterday, official Radio Liberte reported, according to AFP. The city had been without clean water since the civil war broke out in June. The radio also said civil servants were paid their October salaries, although banks have not reopened.

ANGOLA: Government inquiry into prison deaths

The Angolan government has launched an inquiry into the deaths of 10 UNITA prisoners at a jail in the central town of Malanje, Portuguese radio reported. The Angolan embassy in Lisbon was quoted as saying the perpetrators would be punished. The dead inmates are believed to have suffocated in overcrowded conditions. UNITA radio yesterday (Wednesday) accused the government of "torturing and massacring" UNITA sympathisers in territory newly administered by the authorities.

SUDAN: Garang says SPLM does not oppose Islam

Sudanese rebel leader John Garang has stressed his Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) is not hostile to Islam, neither is it separatist. In an interview with the Egyptian news agency MENA, Garang who is visiting Cairo, said the SPLM was trying to unify Sudan on the basis of justice to accommodate all ethnicities and religion. His visit to Cairo, he added, was aimed at briefing Egyptian officials on developments in Sudan. He blamed the failure of the recent Nairobi peace talks on the Sudanese government, claiming the government delegation had "insisted on its views".

GREAT LAKES: Economic growth rate revised down by IMF

Drought and civil war have forced the IMF to revise down its 1997 projected real GDP growth rate for African economies from 4.5 percent to 3.75 percent. In the Great Lakes region, only Uganda is expected to turn in a robust GDP growth of more than five percent. The IMF's recently released 'World Economic Outlook' says the revision of Africa's growth rate is partly attributable to the political turmoil in DRC and Congo-Brazzaville. UNCTAD, in its 1997 report on 'Least Developed Countries', highlights the issue of "social and economic regress" that has afflicted several countries in the Great Lakes over the past decade. The report stresses that lessons need to be drawn from the analysis of development retardation and the "international community cannot afford to ignore the problems of regress." UNCTAD points out Uganda is an example that regress can be reversed even after prolonged civil war. The UN agency calls for external assistance in brokering peace and supporting reconstruction.

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Nairobi, 27 November 1997, 14:40 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Update No. 303 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 29 November-1 December 1997)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Kinshasa calm, but situation remains confused

Calm returned to Kinshasa on Friday evening after heavy shooting rocked the DRC capital earlier in the day and overnight Thursday. Residents described the situation as tense and confused. The government announced it was in "complete control" and blamed Thursday night's outbreak of shooting around Kokolo barracks on a "misunderstanding" between two groups of soldiers. Congolese television reported that a group of soldiers on patrol had opened fire on a group not on patrol and then "refused to heed orders given to it to stop". The authorities said three soldiers were killed and two others injured and said all the unruly troops had been arrested.

Interior Ministry blames "bandits" for city centre shoot-out

In a separate statement also broadcast on Congolese television, the Ministry of Interior said "bandits" were responsible for the shooting which erupted in the centre of the city on Friday afternoon. The statement said the bandits in two jeeps had fired into the air near the Intercontinental Hotel and Tshatsi military camp, believed to be the main base for Tutsi soldiers serving in the Congolese armed forces. DRC troops guarding the Presidential Palace responded in kind and the firing spread to outside the Central Bank and Interior Ministry. The statement said the bandits "would be apprehended shortly" and urged people to go about their normal business because the situation "is calm in the country". It said the government was "keeping an eye on all troublemakers". Some residents, however, said the incident followed a dispute between Tutsi soldiers and members of the national police force and said between six and eight people were believed killed in the shoot-out.

Government details charges against Masasu

The 'New York Times' reported from Kinshasa that as many as 18 people may have been killed in the clashes and said the most likely cause of the tension was last Wednesday's arrest of acting DRC army chief Commander Masasu Nindaga, previously one of President Laurent-Desire Kabila's closest allies in the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL). Aid workers in the field reported that many young Banyamulenge Tutsi recruits were dismayed by his detention and said there were unconfirmed reports of desertions.

The government defended its move and said Masasu had been arrested on the grounds of "military discipline" and notably "for the expropriation of property of others, (and) the creation of a tribal militia." A statement, issued by Kabila's office on Saturday, also accused Masasu of creating a private prison for "arbitrary arrests", liasing with foreign intelligence services, collaborating with the country's enemies, including the hardline Interahamwe Hutu militia, and "creating division within the army and the regular consumption of Indian hemp." International and local media, meanwhile, reported Masasu had been transferred from Kinshasa to Katanga, Kabila's stronghold in an attempt to reduce tensions in the capital and ADFL Secretary-General Deogratias Bugera, who last week expressed regret over Masasu's detention, issued a plea for unity and peace without which, he said, no reconstruction could take place.

Angered by foreign reporting of recent events in the country, the DRC government yesterday (Sunday) banned relays of foreign radio stations by local stations on the FM band. Information Minister Raphael Ghenda said the measure had been taken because foreign radio correspondents had indulged in a disinformation campaign against the country and "systematically altered all facts" surrounding events taking place in DRC. Reuters reported today that the FM transmissions of Radio France Internationale (RFI), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Voice of America (VOA) had all fallen silent.

Troops confiscate food trucks in eastern DRC

Several aid agencies have complained to the local authorities after two trucks carrying food for internally-displaced people were stopped in Rutshuru last Monday and confiscated by DRC troops. A spokesman for World Vision said the two trucks, one belonging to his NGO and the other to WFP, were still in the hands of the army along with the key to a warehouse containing some 84 mt of food aid and 1,979 resettlement kits. "It's a mess," he said, adding radios and handsets had also been confiscated.

Opposition leader accepts post in Kabila government

Frederic Kibassa Maliba has finally agreed to join the government, DRC radio reported. Kabila offered Kibassa Maliba, who recently distanced himself from veteran opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, the post of deputy minister of mines last week, but he did not immediately accept.

Paris demands recall of DRC diplomat in tit-for-tat exchange

France on Monday requested the recall of DRC diplomat Yeye Lobota by the end of the week, retaliating after the number two at the French embassy in Kinshasa, Eric Lubin, was declared persona non grata, French officials announced. Yeye is first counsellor at the DRC embassy in Paris. France previously said it "deplored the decision" to expel Lubin, who returned to France on Sunday morning, after being accused in the Kinshasa press of espionage.

UN mission delayed again

The departure into the field of the UN human rights investigative mission to DRC has been delayed again. Mission spokesman Jose Diaz told IRIN a scouting team, which was supposed to leave for Mbandaka on Saturday, did not leave as planned as the government official who is supposed to accompany them has not yet been designated. He said mission leaders were meeting with government liaison officers today and "hoped to leave on Wednesday".

RWANDA: Genocide survivors protest early releases

Survivors of the 1994 genocide of Rwandan Tutsis and moderate Hutus by hardline elements in the Hutu-dominated army and militia forces have protested against the release of elderly, sick and child prisoners being held for their alleged part in the massacres, government radio reported at the weekend. The demonstration was the second in a week in the southwest district of Gikongoro. A similar protest on November 21 succeeded in having the released prisoners reincarcerated. According to AFP, a Rwandan newspaper today reported the Rwandan authorities had freed 2,129 prisoners since September, when they launched the policy to release very young, sick or elderly detainees. The 'Ukuri' (Truth) newspaper said that those freed were among 121,571 held in jails and makeshift prisons.

Kagame aide Dusaidi dies in South Africa

Claude Dusaidi, senior adviser and spokesman for Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame, has died following complications during a kidney operation, Reuters reported. The agency quoted a Rwandan government official as saying that Dusaidi died on Friday at a Johannesburg hospital during an operation to rectify a kidney ailment.

EAST AFRICA: Floods kill four more in Kenya

Four more people have been killed in floods in Garissa in Kenya's north-east province, taking the country's death toll as a result of the current torrential rains to 10, Kenyan KTN television reported on Sunday. It added that some 1,600 houses had been submerged or swept away in the area.

Meanwhile, Uganda's daily 'New Vision' newspaper reported an estimated 1,000 people had been made homeless in Bundibugyo district after two major rivers, the Mpanga and the Muguzi, burst their banks. It also reported about 7,000 people were cut off in the Kanumba and Kabuga parishes of Karusandara subcounty after a bridge was swept away by heavy rain in Kasese district.

TANZANIA: Two killed in hand grenade attack

At least two people were killed when a hand grenade exploded along a river bank in northwestern Tanzania early this week, the Kiswahili newspaper 'Uhuru' reported on Friday, according to AFP. The daily quoted Kagera Regional Police Commander Juma Ng'wanamwaka as saying the grenades went off on the banks of River Mwiluzi in Ngara district, killing the two, who were fishing on the river bank.

Cholera kills 105 in central Tanzania since June

Tanzanian radio reported from Dodoma that a total of 105 people out of 1,525 who contracted cholera in the central region of the country had died since June this year.

ZAMBIA-ANGOLA: Zambian government denies any involvment with UNITA

The Zambian government has denied Angolan government accusations of supplying arms to former UNITA rebels in Angola and has said it is committed to the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol of November 1994, AFP reported on Sunday. Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Shimba said in a statement that the Zambian government would not do anything to sabotage the protocol because the war in Angola has never been in the interests of Zambia. Meanwhile, Angolan television reported six UNITA soldiers and one police officer were killed after the UNITA men attacked a police convoy near Cutende in Huila province last week in an attempt to capture more weapons.

HUMAN RIGHTS: Mary Robinson to visit Rwanda and South Africa

Mary Robinson, the new UN special envoy for human rights, will visit Rwanda and South Africa later this week on her first visit to Africa since being appointed, a spokesman announced in Geneva. John Mills said Robinson would arrive in Kigali on Thursday and stay until Saturday. Details of her visit to South Africa will be announced later, he added.

IRIN BRIEFING:

IRIN-CEA's fortnightly information exchange on current events in the region will take place at IRIN's offices at 09.00 am on Wednesday 3 December. A number of agencies have agreed to brief the meeting.

Nairobi, 1 December 1997 15:00 gmt

[Ends]

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IRIN Update No. 306 for Central and Eastern Africa (Thursday 4 December 1997)

RWANDA: Rebels spring more prisoners

Hutu rebels sprang another prison yesterday (Wednesday) in central Rwanda, freeing at least 500 inmates, military sources said. Some 300 Interahamwe militia reportedly attacked the prison in Bulinga, Gitarama prefecture, setting fire to the jail and then disappearing into the surrounding hills, before soldiers arrived on the scene. Six people were killed in the attack, according to Rwandan radio. Army troops are combing the hills to rout the rebels and Prime Minister Pierre-Celestin Rwigema visited the area to urge vigilance among the people. The raid follows a similar one in Gisenyi prefecture on Tuesday when 103 prisoners were freed in an attack on a jail in Rwerere. The latest raid in central Rwanda, away from traditional northwest areas, has led to fears the rebels are increasing their sphere of activity.

Former interior minister Seth Sendashonga told IRIN the prison raid was significant "in that what was viewed as a border insurgency has struck in the heart of the country." He added that Hutu disenchantment with the government was countrywide rather than just confined to the northwest due to the "revenge trap" the authorities have fallen into, in which all Hutus are viewed as potential enemies. The tragedy of Rwanda, he said, was the population is "sandwiched between two extremist blocs that hold guns" - the Tutsi political leadership and the rebels.

UN human rights commissioner due in Kigali

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson was due in Kigali today (Thursday) on a four-day official visit. She is expected to discuss the volatile situation in northwest Rwanda and human rights issues in the country. She recently said the human rights situation in Rwanda had "worsened considerably" since the beginning of the year.

Thousands of mines defused but some areas still badly affected

Rwanda's National Demining Office announced that since 1995, about 6,000 out of 100,000 mines have been defused. The mines were planted during the country's civil war that began in 1990. The head of the Office noted some parts of the country, such as Byumba, Mutara and Kigali prefectures, were still heavily mined, Rwandan radio reported.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Army show of support for Kabila

Military units in Bukavu marched in support of President Laurent-Desire Kabila yesterday, DRC radio reported. It said the march also expressed anger against "people of bad faith" who had been distributing leaflets calling for a strike to protest against the authorities. "It (the strike) has not taken place because people did not heed the call", the radio said. Meanwhile, the Kinshasa authorities have told local journalists they must choose between working for the state media or for foreign radios. They are no longer authorised to hold the two jobs. However, the ban on FM foreign radio broadcasts was lifted today.

Amnesty report slammed

The DRC information ministry has accused Amnesty International of trying to discredit the country after it published a report on an alleged massacre carried out by government forces. In a preliminary report, the French section of the human rights group claimed forces loyal to Kabila were responsible for the massacre in northwest Wendji on 13 May and called for an "extensive enquiry". The DRC information ministry statement dubbed Amnesty an "enemy of the Congolese people", saying the report was released to coincide with a DRC donor meeting underway in Brussels. The statement added that the publication was part of a French-led campaign against the country. The 'Friends of Congo' meeting in Brussels today agreed in principle on a World Bank proposal to create a trust fund for the DRC, Reuters reported.

UN team members arrive in Mbandaka A preparatory team of the UN mission investigating alleged human rights violations arrived in the northwest town of Mbandaka yesterday. Mission spokesman Jose Diaz told IRIN the advance team was now "trying to figure out how to take care of the full mission going on Friday or Saturday." "There is no food and no lodging" in Mbandaka, he said. The full mission is expected to be 10-15 strong, comprising mainly human rights investigation officers and forensic experts.

BURUNDI: Boost for education, finance ministries' budget

The government has fixed a draft budget for next year which is lower than the current one due to continuing devaluation of the Burundian france and price increases. Allocations to the education and finance ministries will be increased. Finance Minister Gerard Niyibigira said the sum of 72 billion francs, the same as last year, represented less in real terms, and called on Burundians to prepare to tighten their belts.

UN Special Rapporteur due to visit

The UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burundi, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, is expected to visit the country for the first time this year from 6 to 21 December, a UNHCHR official told IRIN. His latest interim report (released last month and available from IRIN) documents a series of attempts to visit Burundi earlier this year that were unsuccessful. The report also expressed "surprise" at media reports that the Burundian authorities had asked for his mandate to be ended.

UGANDA: Rebels abduct eight

Rebels from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) abducted eight civilians from a camp in western Uganda on Monday, the independent 'Monitor' newspaper reported. It said the rebels pounced on the unsuspecting civilians as they were collecting wood in mountains around the Musana camp in Kyondo, Bukonzo district.

UGANDA/KENYA: Thousands displaced by flooding

Up to 150,000 people are believed to have been displaced by heavy flooding in Uganda, according to a UN report. Serious floods have been reported in western parts of the country. In Bundibugyo for example, an estimated 1,000 people have been displaced and millions of shillings worth of damage caused to crops and properties. DHA-Geneva has appealed for US $3,983,500 to provide assistance to flood-hit areas of Kenya. The current short rains season has seen exceptionally heavy rainfall, in many areas the most intense in 40 years. Worst-hit are Coast, Northeastern and Eastern provinces.

Sudanese refugees flock to Kitgum

About 1,700 Sudanese refugees, mostly women and children, have flocked into the northern Kitgum district fleeing war and famine at home, the 'Monitor' reported today. It said they had come from Tolit in southern Sudan and were being kept at Agolo town. The newspaper quoted UNHCR in Kampala as saying the refugees started arriving around 23 November, and their nutritional status was found to be quite good.

Nairobi, 4 December 1997, 14:45 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Update No. 307 for Central and Eastern Africa (Friday 5 December 1997)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Government opponents arrested in Bukavu

The South Kivu authorities say they have arrested those responsible for distributing leaflets in Bukavu recently and they will be "made to answer for their actions". The leaflets had called for a strike to protest against the authorities. DRC radio said interim governor Benjamin Serukiza congratulated Bukavu residents "for not giving in to blackmail by ill-intentioned people". President Laurent-Desire Kabila meanwhile set up a new military court, which would try soldiers who attacked civilians. Kabila's decision to create the court was prompted by "mounting insecurity in DRC", a National Security Council statement said, according to state radio on Wednesday. In Kinshasa, four journalists working for both local and foreign media were sacked by the state broadcasting network. The acting head of Radio Television Nationale Congolaise accused them of "failing to heed instructions...regarding the dissemination of news". According to AFP, the four journalists said they were accused of "distorting" facts following last week's arrest of Commander Masasu Nindaga and subsequent shootouts in the capital between army factions.

Masasu transferred to undergound jail near Lubumbashi

'Le Palmares' daily reported Masasu had been transferred to an underground jail in Buluwo between Lubumbashi and Kolwezi. He is reported to be on hunger strike. His aides, also under detention, wrote to the newspaper saying Masasu was arrested because of the "courageous position" he adopted on the situation in the country. Meanwhile, at a cabinet meeting on Monday, Kabila stressed the unity of the national army. "There is no army of Katangese, of Rwandans, of Banyamulenge, of ex-FAZ, but only one national army where ethnic factions are banned," the newspaper quoted Kabila as saying.

Amnesty alleges "wanton killings" in DRC

A report by Amnesty International claimed there had been a "pattern of wanton killing of Hutus" in DRC from December 1996. It said witnesses interviewed by the organisation had spoken of massacres and killings by members of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL). The report called for a "thorough investigation" into the allegations and urged cooperation from the international community.

Friends of Congo meeting urges human rights guarantees

Foreign Minister Bizimia Karaha told the 'Friends of Congo' donor meeting in Brussels yesterday there would not be lasting peace in his country without economic recovery. Voice of America radio said the meeting, attended by 18 countries and 10 international organisations, agreed in principle on a trust fund for DRC, without determining the amount. VOA pointed out the European Commission is the largest potential donor with US $168 million of aid currently frozen. The EC warned there must be guarantees on human rights before most of the money could be released. However, US $50 million will be unblocked for the health sector and there will be further aid for an infrastructure programme, VOA said.

RWANDA: Rebels on recruitment drive, army says

Army spokesman Richard Sezibera said the recent insecurity in some parts of Gisenyi prefecture had to be put in the context of a general improvement in security in northern Rwanda. In an interview with Radio Rwanda yesterday (Thursday), he acknowledged security in some Gisenyi communes over the last two months had "not been particularly good". "Persistant attacks, sometimes involving big numbers of armed groups" had been carried out in Giciye, Rwerere, Ndusu, Gatonde and some other communes.But the neighbouring prefecture of Ruhengeri had been "particularly peaceful", as had Byumba prefecture. Large areas of Gisenyi itself were calm, he said.He claimed the armed forces were doing a good job and there was no need to panic. Militarily the rebels were not a threat and had suffered heavy losses. Thus, Sezibera said, the recent prison attacks were part of a recruitment drive. He urged civilians not to allow the rebels to melt into their communities.

Robinson arrives in Kigali

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson arrived in Kigali last night, saying she had "a lot of serious questions" to ask, AFP reported. She is expected to focus on the security situation in northwest areas of Rwanda.

BURUNDI: Peace dialogue opens in Brussels

A peace dialogue between Burundians living in their country and those abroad is due to open in Brussels today. They are being brought together by an organisation known as the Compagnie des Apotres de la paix (CAP) who says its aim is to enable all Burundians to contribute to the peace process. It is hoped the meeting, from 5 to 7 December, will be the first of a series to be organised in France, Switzerland and Kenya, CAP said in a statement.

Nyerere planning consultative meeting

Peace mediator Julius Nyerere is planning to hold a consultative meeting of all parties in the Burundi conflict soon. His aide Mark Bomani told Reuters the talks would be held "in the not too distant future" in the Tanzanian town of Arusha. The idea was not to negotiate but to discuss how to move the peace process forward, he said, adding it was up to Burundian leader Pierre Buyoya to decide whether or not he wanted to attend.

Parliament ready to work with government

National Assembly Speaker Leonce Ngendakumana said yesterday parliament was prepared to work with the government to find a peaceful solution to Burundi's problems. He proposed setting up a joint committee which would meet with regional leaders seeking to broker peace in the country. Ngendakumana said parliament had made a commitment to "be realistic and to make political compromises". However, it would "never support the current leadership if it chooses to resolve the internal problems of this country through war," he warned.

UNHCR to concentrate on southern provinces

UNHCR is to shift focus in 1998, according to a DHA report from Burundi. It is planning to gradually phase out its operations in the northwest provinces of Bubanza and Cibitoke, to which the majority of people, who sought refuge in former Zaire, have returned within the past year. UNHCR will instead concentrate its activities on the southern and southeastern provinces in anticipation of the return of up to approximately 250,000 Burundians who remain in camps in Tanzania.

UGANDA: Rebels reportedly kill 21

Security forces said rebels from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) killed 21 people in an attack Tuesday night in the Kyarusozi area of western Kabarole district. According to BBC radio, the victims were ordered to lie on the ground and were then hacked to death with machetes. A number of people were also abducted.

Permanent committee on border security with Rwanda set up

Uganda and Rwanda have agreed to set up a permanent committee on border scurity and to extradite suspected criminals, the state-owned 'New Vision' reported today. The decisions follow a meeting on Wednesday between officials from Rwanda's Ruhengeri prefecture and their counterparts in Uganda's southwest Kabale and Kisoro districts.

KENYA: UNHCR moving stranded refugees

UNHCR is moving to higher ground 5,000 refugees whose shelters were destroyed by heavy flooding in the northeast Ifo and Dagaheley camps. Rains are still continuing in the Dadaab area and water is still a metre deep in much of the area, UNHCR said. The only way to reach the stranded refugees is by air. No vehicles have been able to reach the camps for two weeks now.

ANGOLA: Albright wants to meet Savimbi

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has asked UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi to come to Luanda for a meeting during her visit there later this month, AFP reported. It quoted a State Department spokesman as saying, however, the "odds are rather low" as Savimbi rarely ventures from his Andulo stronghold in central Angola.Albrght is due to arrive in Angola on 12 December.

1,500 refugees back from Zambia

Official sources in Angola said some 1,500 refugees have returned home from Zambia as part of a repatriation operation launched in mid-October. An estimated 100,000 refugees fled the country's civil war to Zambia, AFP reported. It quoted Minister for Social Reintegration Albino Malungo as saying repatriation had been hampered by a lack of financial resources and a bad infrastructure.

Nairobi, 5 December 1997, 14:30 gmt

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IRIN Update No. 311 for Central and Eastern Africa (Thursday 11 December 1997)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Mai-Mai launch attack on Bukavu

Mai-Mai fighters and ex-Rwandan army soldiers attacked Bukavu town early today (Thursday), humanitarian sources reported. Heavy fighting, including intense street battles, raged from about 03:00 a.m. until about 08:00 a.m. when calm appeared to have been restored. The interim governor of South Kivu confirmed on public radio there had been an attack by ex-FAR and Interahamwe forces on several points around the town, but said army soldiers had repulsed them and the situation was now under control. He pledged the army would pursue "these enemies until they uproot the last root".

Attackers appeal to ex-FAZ elements to join them

At one stage during the fighting, residents said a local FM radio station began transmitting broadcasts claiming the attackers represented ex-FAR (Forces armees Rwandaises) of the defeated Hutu-dominated government of Juvenal Habyarimana and non-Tutsi soldiers in the current DRC army. The radio broadcasts also appealed to elements of the defeated army of ex-Zairean dictator Mobutu Sese Seko to join them.

Fighting also reported around Uvira

There were also reports of fighting further south in the area around Uvira. Humanitarian sources said some aid agencies operating in the area were considering an evacuation fearing a situation similar to the one in Bukavu could develop. Some aid sources said the insecurity could jeopardise further refugee rapatriation operations from Tanzania across Lake Tanganyika to Uvira.

WFP ordered out of Goma, CRS to stay

WFP said it had been asked to leave Goma. The agency told IRIN it had received a letter from the authorities saying it should not operate in Goma, but no reasons were given. WFP has asked for an explanation and is staying put for the moment. Negotiations with the authorities are underway. Earlier this week, seven NGOs were ordered to cease operations in Goma. However, contrary to a report in IRIN Update 310 on 10 December, CRS is not pulling out of Goma. Clarifying its position, the NGO told IRIN they were in fact initiating two new projects this month in Goma in support of peace and justice issues. Budgetary constraints have, however, forced a reduction of staff in the Goma office, the NGO said.

RWANDA: Rebels kill mayor, 11 others in northwest

Rwandan rebels have killed a mayor and 11 other people in a village south of the northwestern town of Gisenyi, news reports quoted a senior military official as saying today. The reports said the attack took place on Tuesday night in the village of Ramba. The official added that Mayor Pascal Owimana, who had provided refuge to people fleeing clashes during Rwanda's civil war and 1994 genocide, was killed and his house torched during the attack.

UGANDA: Albright announces aid for northern Uganda

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright yesterday announced US $four million in aid for northern Uganda where the government is battling a rebel insurgency it says is supported by Khartoum's Islamic-backed government. According to news reports, Albright said: "The US will stand with the Ugandan government in its efforts to end the violence of this (Sudanese) regime and improve the security of Ugandans, especially children." Meanwhile, Uganda's 'New Vision' newspaper reported today that 13 rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army were killed on Monday and 27 captured when a military helicopter gunship backed by infantry attacked and shelled one of their hideouts. Army Commander Brigadier James Kazini told reporters from his Gulu barracks office the attack took place in Klayorbit forest, Aswa county, some 24 km east of Gulu. Another newspaper, 'The Monitor' said a rebel captured in the attack had reported that LRA Commander Marianno Ochai Lagira had been shot in the leg during the fighting. Lagira was accused last year of engineering a raid on St Mary's School in northern Kitgum district, in which 139 schoolgirls were abducted. Twenty-one of them remain in captivity.

SUDAN: Khartoum angered by Albright comments

Meanwhile, Sudan has reacted angrily to remarks by Albright on the need to isolate Khartoum. A Sudanese foreign ministry statement yesterday condemned Albright's statements as "clearly manifesting America's interference in other countries' affairs and inciting disputes and disturbances," AFP reported. Albright made her comments after talks with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni on the second leg of her seven-nation African tour. She further upset Khartoum by meeting the head of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), John Garang, and three leaders of the allied opposition National Democratic Alliance, calling on them to unite and show they could form a credible government.

Khartoum has described Albright's tour as a "US-Israeli ploy to destabilise Sudan." Khartoum is blacklisted by Washington for sponsoring international terrorism and in November, President Bill Clinton applied sanctions against what the US describes as a hardline Islamic government. The first two ports of call on the Albright tour were Ethiopia and Uganda, countries that Khartoum accuses of cross-border operations in support of Sudanese rebels and which have received US military support.

According to a spokesman in the US embassy in Nairobi, the idea that Albright's trip is about reviewing the success of Washington's anti-Khartoum alliance has been over-played. He said the real focus of the tour is "to meet the new generation of (African) leaders" in the Great Lakes. Albright goes on to visit Rwanda, DRC, Angola, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The spokesman said Washington was concerned the Great Lakes region could become "a great drain if not turned around or the boil taken off." According to the spokesman, the tour will also prepare the ground for a planned visit to Africa by Clinton next year.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Team begins work for reconciliation conference

Congo's new rulers have set up a 100-member team to prepare for a national reconciliation forum in January in Brazzaville, devastated by months of civil war, AFP reported on Wednesday. It said the minister responsible for organising the conference, Firmin Ayessa, said the planning committee was set up on Tuesday to draft discussion papers for the gathering to be held from January 5 to 11. Ayessa was quoted as saying that although members of the committee belonged to political parties or professional or other social groups, they were chosen for their "competence and

experience" and not on political or regional grounds.

UNITED NATIONS: UNHCR details refugee numbers in Kenya

UNHCR Representative for Kenya and Somalia Yvette Stevens said today Kenya now sheltered some 177,000 refugees compared to half a million five years ago. Speaking on the occasion of the national launch of UNHCR's biennial 'The State of the World's Refugees' report, Stevens said the numbers had dropped tremendously as the situation in the region had stabilised and praised the cooperation her agency had received from the Kenyan government in reducing the refugee population.

Nairobi, 11 December 1997

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IRIN Update No. 313 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 13-15 December 1997)

RWANDA: US expert to investigate camp massacre, Kabila wants international probe

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright announced in Kinshasa on Friday she would send a State Department expert on crimes against humanity, David Shepherd, to investigate last week's massacre of Congolese Tutsi refugees in Rwanda by Hutu rebels, AFP reported. Estimates of the death toll in the Thursday attack on Mudende camp, in the northwestern Gisenyi prefecture, range from the initial count of 271, to a provisional tally of 1,643 released by Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Internal Affairs Minister, Mwenze Kongolo. Speaking alongside Albright at the press conference, DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila called for an international investigation into the massacre. "Here, when you kill a killer, an Interahamwe, the international community sets up an investigation," he complained, in reference to the UN probe into alleged human rights abuses in the DRC.

Annan condemns massacre

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan condemned the camp slaughter and renewed "the international demand that the security of vulnerable refugees be respected." In a statement on Friday, he said "it is most distressing that after almost four years, prospects for peace, stability and national reconciliation remain dim." UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata also condemned the attack, calling it "barbaric". UNHCR spokeswoman Pamela O'Toole said in Geneva: "Most of the dead and wounded were mutilated by machetes. The attackers were merciless, killing even babies." Army response "complicated" by refugee panic

The Rwandan army commander for the northwest region,Colonel Kayumba Nyamwase told AFP the rebels came both from the town of Kanama and the DRC border in "a coordinated attack." He said intervention by the army was "complicated by the panic that swept through the camp" of some 17,000 people. An eyewitness, quoted by the news agency, said the rebels "came at midnight and encircled the camp, armed with rifles, grenades, axes and spears. They put up barriers on the roads, the tracks and all around to prevent the soldiers from coming."

IMF approves US $8 million loan

The IMF on Friday approved an US $8 million dollar loan for Rwanda to support the government's economic programme, AFP reported from Washington. The loan follows a US $12 million credit granted in April, the IMF said in a statement. "The Rwandese authorities have made progress under the 1997 IMF-supported programme in resettling a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons, rehabilitating the economy and nurturing economic recovery," the fund said.

Freed prisoners surrender

Some 470 genocide suspects freed from a jail in central Rwanda during a raid by Hutu rebels have so far surrendered to the authorities, Radio Rwanda said. Around 580 inmates escaped from the jail in Bulinga, Gitarama prefecture, during the 3 December attack. Meanwhile, humanitarian sources report that propaganda leaflets are being circulated by the rebels claiming they control Gisenyi prefecture and intend to "take Gitarama".

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Local leaders demand cash to allow probe to proceed

Local DRC traditional leaders are blocking the UN massacre probe in the northwestern region until they are given cash and supplies, AFP quoted the UN team spokesman Jose Diaz as saying yesterday (Sunday). The demands were made in the town of Wendji, where angry but non-violent protests took place against the UN investigators on Thursday, Diaz said. "The experts believe that these new difficulties rule out any significant work being done before the end of 1997," he added. Another group of UN investigators in Mbandaka, 25 km north of Wendji, were continuing their task unimpeded and continue to record eyewitness accounts, Diaz noted. On Friday, Kabila said in Kinshasa that he was unaware of the Wendji protests and insisted the UN team was "free to work".

Kabila visits China

Kabila arrived in China on Sunday on his first official visit outside Africa since coming to power in May this year. The visit is at the invitation of the Chinese government and would last a "few days", Kinshasa TV announced.

ANGOLA: Albright "disappointed" over Savimbi's no-show

Albright, in Angola on the fifth leg of her African tour, said on Friday she was disappointed that former rebel leader Jonas Savimbi had turned down an invitation to meet her during her visit. "Dr. Savimibi and the UNITA leaders who remain outside Luanda can expect only marginalisation if they do not move swiftly to comply fully with the Lusaka [peace] protocol", Albright warned. Savimbi has consistently refused to go to Luanda on the grounds that his safety is not guaranteed. UNITA radio reported that a message from Savimbi was handed to Albright. The contents of the message were unknown, the station, monitored by the BBC, said. The Secretary of State did however meet with a UNITA delegation which stressed that the planned withdrawal of the UN Observer Mission in Angola in the first quarter of 1998 "would be suicidal" for the peace process.

Savimbi meets UN Special Representative Beye

On Saturday, UN Special Representative Alioune Blondin Beye visited Savimbi in his central highlands base of Andulo to discuss the peace process and deliver a message from dos Santos. According to UNITA radio, Savimbi told Beye that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan had failed to recognise any efforts by UNITA to comply with the Lusaka peace agreement.

US committed to Angolan regional role - Albright

In Luanda, Albright held talks with President Eduardo dos Santos and said Washington was committed to helping the country become a major player in the region, AFP reported. At a brief stop in the oil enclave of Cabinda she announced a joint initiative by the US oil company Chevron and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to "support reconstruction and economic development" in Angola. Albright added that Washington is financing a US $20 million loan to the government to buy food. Noting that Angolan oil represents seven percent of US crude imports - worth more than two billion dollars - she said she was "discussing with (the Angolan state oil company) Sonangol and Chevron a US

$350 million package to support the purchase of American equipment" by Luanda.

SUDAN-EGYPT: Beshir's planned Cairo visit signals possible rapprochement

Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir will travel "soon" to Egypt amid growing signs that Cairo and Khartoum want to improve strained relations, AFP reported yesterday. The Egyptian news agency MENA said Sudanese Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mustafa Osman Ismail, will be in Cairo "within 48 hours" to prepare the visit. Relations between Cairo and Khartoum deteriorated in 1995 when Egypt accused Sudan of involvement in a failed bid by Egyptian islamists to kill President Hosni Mubarak. Bashir's visit would follow rebel SPLA leader John Garang's trip this month to Cairo, and Albright's meeting last week in Uganda with Garang and other leaders of the Sudan opposition after which she called for the "isolation" of Khartoum.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Lissouba supporters call for boycott of reconciliation forum

Supporters of ousted president Pascal Lissouba have turned down an invitation to a government-organised national reconciliation forum due on 5-11 January. Brazzaville's official Radio Liberte broadcast on Saturday a statement by the opposition Republican Space for Democracy and National Unity (ERDUN) which said the planned forum is being organised by "dictatorial" forces, AFP reported. The statement urged people not to take part in such a "masquerade" and asked the international community to withhold aid and to take steps to "return the legal government" to power. Forum coordinator Sebastien Bowao told Radio Liberte that if ERDUN was convinced of its popular support, it should take part in the forum. According to AFP, the conference is to decide on the nature of multiparty general elections promised by military leader Denis Sassou Nguesso.

UGANDA: Rebels kill eight

Rebels of the Uganda National Rescue Front II (UNRF-II) killed eight people and wounded six others in an ambush on a passenger vehicle on Friday in the northwest Arua region. The state-owned 'New Vision' today (Monday) also quoted senior army officials as saying that several UNRF-II soldiers who survived an ambush last week by the SPLA had surrendered to an army post in Yumbe. The paper said 25 UNRF-II fighters were killed in the SPLA ambush in southern Sudan, out of a column of 150 rebels heading towards the Ugandan border. UNRF-II, headed by Ali Bamuze who served under Idi Amin, is a splinter group of the West Nile Bank Front.

KENYA: Cholera outbreak in Nairobi claims 30 lives

A Kenyan MP has blamed the Nairobi City council for the outbreak of cholera in the capital which has claimed at least 30 lives in the past week, the official 'Kenya Times' reported today. Gerishon Kirima said insanitary condition's in Nairobi's slums had contributed to the outbreak. Humanitarian sources told IRIN that ministry of health officials are touring the two worst-hit areas of Korogocho and Mathare. Meanwhile, the privately-owned 'Daily Nation' said the cholera death toll in the Coast province has risen to 66.

Nairobi, 15 December 1997, 14:15 gmt

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Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Update 316, 12/18/97

U N I T E D N A T I O N S Department of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 316 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 18 December 1997)

BURUNDI: Eight soldiers killed in mine blast

Eight soldiers were killed yesterday (Wednesday) in an anti-tank mine blast near Mubimbi, about 20 km from Bujumbura, AFP reported. To counter the threat of mines laid by Hutu rebels, local people have been asked to remain vigilant "because we cannot have troops available to do that 24 hours a day," Bujumbura province governor Stanislas Ntahobari said. According to a DHA report, there were 48 confirmed mine incidents between October 1996 and November 1997. The majority of the attacks have occurred around Bujumbura.

Supreme Court asked to overturn Minani's election as FRODEBU leader

Burundi's interior ministry has asked the Supreme Court to overturn the nomination of the exiled opposition leader Jean Minani as the head of the mainly Hutu Front pour la democratie au Burundi (FRODEBU), the ministry said Wednesday. Tanzania-based Minani, who the government accuses of supporting Hutu rebels, was elected leader at a party congress on 6 December. FRODEBU Secretary-General Augustin Nzojibwami said the party would win the legal battle "absolutely."

125 Congolese repatriated

Fifty-five Congolese families mistakenly expelled from South Kivu were repatriated with the help of UNHCR on 5 December, humanitarian sources report. The 125 Congolese, caught up in last month's deportations of mainly Burundian and Rwandan Hutus from eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), were living in desperate conditions in the northern province of Cibitoke. Five of the group died from illness and malnutrition.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Cholera outbreak kills 38 near Kisangani

Humanitarian sources report that 38 people have died in a cholera outbreak in Kapalata, 5 km from Kisangani. The epidemic is currently killing an estimated seven people per day, with some 800 cases observed since 18 November. Humanitarian agencies are attempting to improve the sanitary conditions at Kisingani hospital and provide equipment and medicine. Access to the military camp in Kaplata has, however, been denied.

ANGOLA: Security improves in "sensitive" areas

The UN peacekeeping mission in Angola, MONUA, on Wednesday said the security situation has improved in the most "sensitive" areas of the country, notably the northeastern diamond fields where a three-year-old peace deal has yet to be implemented, AFP reported. According to the United Nations, the government now has complete control of five out of Angola's 15 provinces - the northern provinces of Bengo, Zaire and Kwanza-Norte, and the southern provinces of Benguela and Huila. A MONUA spokesman told AFP that UNITA retains fighters and military and political structures in the other 10 provinces.

3,000 flee Cabinda clashes

At least 3,000 people have fled clashes between separatists and the army in the north of the oil-rich enclave of Cabinda, AFP quoted "reliable sources" in Luanda as saying. The displaced have been arriving in Cabinda city since the start of the month. The sources said military activity by various factions of the Cabinda Enclave Liberation Front (FLEC) has increased in recent weeks. The Luanda government has refused negotiations with the rebels until a complete ceasefire is achieved.

Elf makes major new find

French oil company Elf Aquitaine said today (Thursday) it had discovered a major oilfield in the Dalia field off the Angolan coast. The new field, at a depth of 1,250 metres, is some 200 km northwest of Luanda, AFP reported.

SUDAN: Machar claims victory in battle with SPLA near Torit

Pro-government forces claimed victory in a clash with the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in southern Sudan's East Equatoria province. Riek Machar, the chairman of the South Sudan Coordination Council, said in a statement that the South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF) on Tuesday captured the Solora mountain area near Torit and inflicted heavy losses on the SPLA, AFP reported. Machar said heavy equipment was captured in the fighting close to the Ugandan border. The SSDF groups the militiamen of six south Sudanese factions allied to the government.

State governors claim Eritrea, Uganda offensive planned

Meanwhile, Kassala state governor Ibrahim Mahmoud told the 'Al-Rai al-Aam' daily that Eritrean troops "backed by Israeli experts" and SPLA rebels were amassed along the border. He said Eritrea was planning an "offensive on Sudan ... masterminded by the United States and Israel which has a military presence in the region." In the south, East Equatoria Governor Abdallah Kafelo said on Thursday in the Khartoum daily 'Alwan' that there were "hostile activities" by Ugandan troops on the south Sudan border in addition to those of the SPLA in and around Torit.

Russian oil pipeline deal signed

The Sudanese government and a Russian company Lukoil on Tuesday signed a US $30 million oil pipeline construction agreement to link the Hajlij oil field with Ubaid refinery, the Sudanese news agency reported. Energy and Mining Minister Dr Awad Ahmad al-Jaz said investment in oil production was a vital strategic goal for Khartoum.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Paris appoints new envoy

France has named Herve Bolot as its new ambassador to Brazzaville. He will replace Raymond Cesaire, who remained in the city throughout the five month civil war, Gabonese Africa No 1 radio said.

Nairobi, 18 December 1997 14:30 gmt

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DRC: IRIN Update on Uvira zone, South Kivu, 12/18/97

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IRIN Update on Uvira Zone, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, 18 December 1997

INTRODUCTION

Uvira zone, flash point of the 1996-97 Zaire war and long a troublespot in the post-colonial history of the Democratic Republic of Congo, once again faces an uncertain future. At the same time as thousands of Congolese are returning from Tanzania, and hopes for recovery from conflict and economic paralysis were rising, low-level conflict and political uncertainty threaten the region's peace again. Humanitarian agencies are working in relief and rehabilitation under conditions of considerable political tension and security risk.

Despite the overthrow of former president Mobutu Sese Seko, local tensions in South Kivu have endured, as they have in the Banyarwanda-populated regions of North Kivu. The rebellion of the ethnic Tutsi Congolese of South Kivu (the Banyamulenge) began in self-defence, but their uprising also provided the springboard for a collection of national and international alliances which ousted former president Mobutu Sese Seko. Since the war, many key military and administrative posts in the Uvira Zone of South Kivu have been taken by ethnic Tutsis, and the sole permitted political party, the former rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) exercises control in all areas of government.

Resentment, rather than reconciliation, appears to characterize the reaction among many non-Tutsi in the region. Sources close to the Banyamulenge leadership expressed the frustration among the Tutsi community at the phenomenon: "overnight we seem to have gone from victims to oppressors". The right of the Banyamulenge Tutsi to Zairean nationality and threats to expel them from Zaire were one of the key catalysts for the formation of the ADFL in October 1996. However, the political advancement of the Banyamulenge, coupled with the presence of Rwandan and other forces within the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) seems to have reinforced prejudice against them as "foreigners". "Winning the peace" is the challenge for the Banyamulenge now, one administrator told IRIN.

Bazire Kushebana, the Administrator of Uvira Territory, (the post was formerly "Commissaire de Zone") in a recent open letter, acknowledges that the challenges for the government of Fizi and Uvira zones, which were seriously affected by fighting and looting during the war, include "corruption, chaos, embezzlement, xenophobia and tribalism". The letter also blames the Mobutu regime for these problems.

As well as disgruntlement, the government faces armed insurrection. The various armed groups operating against the ADFL in eastern DRC, some of whom are Rwandan and Burundian militia, while others are ethnically-based Congolese militia, have become known collectively as the "Mai-Mai". The term, meaning "water-water", originally referred to a superstitious belief that fighters are protected from bullets by water, and has been in use since the early part of the century. Rebel militia are known to operate northwest of Uvira (groups as large as 300) and south of Fizi, where armed members of the Bembe ethnic group have proved troublesome for the ADFL since the early days of the war. If anything, the Mai-Mai appear to have not only become more dangerous but more sophisticated in recent months, for example using a clandestine radio station to broadcast propaganda to Bukavu. Pockets of Mai-Mai activity are now also reported in a wider area.

ADFL forces have also been accused of abuses of human rights. Amnesty International has documented post-war incidents in the area and mentions attacks in the villages of Wimbi, Alela, Abanga and Talama on the South-Kivu-Katanga border, in August, in which up to 800 unarmed residents were killed, and the killing of dozens of demonstrators in May 1997 in Uvira town by government troops.

Banyamulenge sources further allege attacks and cattle theft in their heartland of the high plateau west of Uvira. For further background on insecurity in the Kivus this year, see IRIN Background Brief on Kivu, September 10 1997. For background on the situation in South Kivu, please refer to: IRIN Briefing on the conflict in South Kivu 10 September 1996, IRIN Update on the conflict in South Kivu 11 October 1996 and IRIN Update on South Kivu 26 October 1996.

Two incidents in November point to tensions within the DRC army - in both Kalemie and Baraka, units of the Congolese army clashed. Reliable sources indicate that in both cases, the clashes were between Tutsi and non-Tutsi soldiers. The formation of a unit called Detection Militaire des Anti-Patries (DEMIAP) was announced on 26 November on state radio. Its function is to maintain discipline within the DRC army. The arrest of Commander Masasu Nindaga, a founder member of the ADFL, at around the same time seems to have become a rallying point for the non-Tutsi soldiers of the DRC forces. President Laurent-Desire Kabila's statement on the arrest alleges that Masasu was collaborating with the Interahamwe.

The involvement of Rwanda and to a lesser extent, Burundi and Uganda in the Zairean civil war and their links with the Banyamulenge Tutsi of South Kivu seems to have led to a complaint that the region is "occupied". The only common theme of the Kivu opponents of the AFDL is a threat to expel Tutsis. While "Mai-Mai" remains a catch-all expression for many disparate and uncoordinated groups, a political umbrella called the Alliance pour la resistance democratique (ARD) was announced in August 1997, according to a Kinshasa newspaper, linking the Burundi Hutu-dominated Conseil national pour la defence de la democratie (CNDD) and Bembe milita.

The attack by Mai-Mai on Bukavu on 11 December, followed by a major incursion into Rwanda and the grim massacre at Mudende camp the same week, possibly launched from within North Kivu, illustrate the continuing volatility of the eastern DRC and its significance for security in the Great Lakes region as a whole.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The positive achievements of the post-war period are evident: people are particularly relieved the abuses of the Forces armees zairoises (FAZ) are a thing of the past. Officials say civil servants have been receiving salaries since September, and the military is paid. Water and electricity systems are restored, but supplies are intermittent in Uvira. Most roads are open, although occasional security incidents and fairly frequent military checkpoints add an element of uncertainty to the free movement of goods and people. Despite the sanctions on Burundi, Bujumbura offers a busy market for Congolese goods and a source of imported products, which benefits both the public and private sectors.

The Uvira zone was one of the worst affected in the country by the war. Rehabilitation programmes underway by international aid agencies include repairing public buildings such and schools and clinics as well as re-establishing health and agricultural systems. The human impact of the war was also widespread: a nutritional survey in and around Uvira showed a global (moderate and severe) malnutrition rate of about 13 percent among under-fives shortly after the end of the war. Thanks to interventions by UNICEF and NGOs, the rate has now declined to the point where no special feeding programmes are thought necessary in Uvira at present, according to the NGO Action Contre le Faim (ACF).

Real economic progress will be hard to deliver, and in the meantime, opponents of the ADFL have found fertile ground both among civilians and within the military. Local officials point to a hiatus in foreign assistance thanks to the long-delayed UN human rights investigation.

Until the recent 'Friends of Congo' meeting in Brussels and progress with the UN human rights team, few donors had made commitments to the DRC. Whatever conditions are attached to reconstruction aid and despite the role of the private sector in investment in DRC, it remains clear that in terms of basic infrastructure, the DRC remains ruined by 30 years of neglect and mismanagement which would test the ablest local administrator.

Hopes for stability

The government of Laurent Desire Kabila has made a number of efforts to defuse tension in the region. However, the outright victory of the Tutsi-led ADFL, seems, if anything, to have heightened long-standing antagonism between communities and genuine "peaceful cohabitation" seems a dim hope.

Missions by Commander Masasu and a General Lwecha of the ADFL, and a special commission headed by Ms Madishi Ramm, as well as efforts by civil society including a large christian meeting at Kinembwe (southwest of Uvira) in mid-September, have not yet borne fruit. However, reconciliation efforts have not yet been abandoned, and IRIN was told of several new mass meetings or Christian gatherings which aim to build confidence between divided communities in the area. A number of local NGOs include peace activies in their portfolios.

But gloom is not uncommon. A source close to the Banyamulenge leadership told IRIN that the neighbouring peoples were "preparing for war". The irony of the Tutsi-inspired Alliance victory, he said, is that the military victory was so swift (about eight months), that the political planning was left far behind. While a senior local administrator told IRIN that ethnic mistrust was a "false problem", he admitted that it was hard to convince the communities that life was improving in the absence of tangible economic improvement.

In the Uvira zone, it is apparent that a number of measures have been taken to counter the threat of insurgency or infiltration. In early November, many men in Uvira were rounded up by the authorities for questioning. Indirectly, this has led to the arrest of one of the two deputy Uvira administrators, who ordered the release of some suspects held after the roundup, and was then himself arrested. A house rented by an NGO on the lakeshore has been taken over by military (some sources claim they are Burundian), who intend to monitor the security situation on the lake. A system known as "chembe-chembe" has already been instigated in the region by the ADFL, which is a network of political and security cells at the local level.

HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS

Internally displaced people

ICRC has been the agency most involved in the resettlement and support of displaced Congolese people. Up to 200,000 people (40,000 families) have been assisted by ICRC since the establishment of the office in Uvira in March 1997. ICRC believes that most displaced people who fled their homes during the war are now back and will be winding up the program - its largest in the country - at the end of the year. ICRC have also been involved in transporting displaced people who have ended up far from their original areas. The last group of displaced people in Kinshasa were recently brought to Kisangani by ICRC on barges.

Repatriation of Congolese from Tanzania to DRC

About 74,000 Congolese remnain from those who sought asylum in Tanzania during the war in the former Zaire. They have been returning home in larger and larger numbers during the course of 1997. UNHCR says thousands have made the trip under their own means so far, but stresses that protection and assistance on return is much easier when the returnees come in organized "convoys". Almost all the refugee families depend on farming for their livelihood, according to UNHCR surveys.

On arrival, screening is conducted by the intelligence service Agence nationale des renseignements (ANR), and registration is done by UNHCR. Returnees have been searched thoroughly and a few temporarily arrested. ANR officials are said to pay particularly close attention to papers and documents carried by the refugees.

A recent UNHCR report declares that - apart from a month's supension - the operation is running "very smoothly". UNHCR suspended repatriation from late October to late November following what it said was a deterioration of security in South Kivu.

However, both Tanzania and the DRC were keen to see the operation resume. Following a visit by DRC reconstruction minister Etienne Mbaya to Dar es Salaam on 16-20 November, a joint statement between the two countries called for the operation to resume. Organized repatriations from 1 September to 8 December 1997 have brought nearly 10,000 Congolese home. UNHCR expects to complete the repatriation of about 55,000 registered for return by June 1998. Hundreds of Congolese have also been returning spontaneously from Zambia.

While all organized repatriations have arrived in Uvira so far, UNHCR is investing in building a jetty at Baraka so that large boats can offload people and cargo directly, thereby cutting the road distance required for the truck transport of returnees. The onset of the rainy season this month will be an additional factor for agencies involved in the logistics such as WFP and World Vision. The facility at Baraka could also contribute to trade with Tanzania in future. Over half of the returnees will go to the Fizi zone, rather than the Uvira area. One of UNHCR's programmes is the rehabilitation of the road and bridges between Uvira and Fizi. The operation is expected to cost about $500,000 and is executed by Oxfam Quebec.

Refugees and expulsions

On 18 November, UNHCR announced that several thousand mainly Hutu Rwandan and Burundian people had been rounded up, expelled from South Kivu and deposited at the Burundian and Rwandan borders. Humanitarian sources indicate that the operations were coordinated between the military on both sides of the border. In all, about 3,000 people were expelled in the first two weeks on the month. Between 800-1,000 were sent to Rwanda, while the rest went to Burundi. About 470 cases of "mistaken identity" - in which Congolese citizens were expelled along with Rwandans and Burundians have resulted in a low-key and successful effort to have them brought home again. Meanwhile, UNHCR believes "thousands" of genuine Burundian refugees may remain in DRC, keeping a low profile. If they come forward, UNHCR assists them to repatriate.

Unaccompanied children

Coopi, with funding from UNHCR and collaboration from UNICEF, runs a centre for unaccompanied children (UACs) in Uvira. An average of 50 Congolese, Rwandan and Burundian children stay at the centre while their families, immediate or extended, are traced, or foster families can be found. Coopi works with ICRC and UNICEF to assist tracing. Mobile teams monitor the welfare of 365 more children living with foster families, and pick up newly-found UACs. About 300 children have passed through the Coopi centre since June. All have been re-unified with family or placed in foster families. The sight of dozens of the children singing Christmas carols in a dusty yard is a bitter-sweet testament to the dislocation and conflict that has ripped through the region in recent years. See IRIN Special Feature - Unaccompanied Children 30 July 1997, for background on UACs.

Government - NGO/UN relations

Relations between aid agencies and the authorities remain cordial, but the recent seizure of a lakeside NGO house and store by the military has increased a sense of anxiety amongst international NGOs. News from North Kivu of the "suspension" of the activities of at least five international and two local NGOs has done little to allay the anxiety of NGOs based in Uvira. While government officials claim political bias and inefficiency in the work of international aid organizations, an NGO reporesentative said the NGOs fear being viewed as "milking cows".

Minister Mbaya took the opportunity of his visit to Uvira last week to renew his warnings that the affairs of NGOs will be more tightly regulated in future. In an inter-agency meeting, later reported by Uvira radio, he posed the rhetorical question: "does the government of the DRC have a problem with NGOs?"

His answer was "yes, almost". He announced that legislation was on the way to "redefine" cooperation, with a distinct preference for bilateral and multilateral cooperation above that of NGOs. Mbaya acknowledged that NGOs have been a "positive revolution" in recent years, and he accepted their usefulness and the role of the churches during the Mobutu era "in the absence of the state". However, describing the current period as the "renaissance of the power of the state", in future he rejected "any aid that passes into the state without consultation." Kinshasa has for some time been warning that NGOs should be prepared for a re-organization.

In Uvira, a regional development committee has been set up and provides a forum for contact between the administration and aid agencies. In an interview, Uvira Administrator Bazire Kushebana urged "new ways of working", and expressed frustration at what he said was a lack of consultation between aid agencies and the government. He said the government did not like to be "surprised" at the formation of projects without prior consultation. Also, he stressed the importance the government gave to making sure local people were employed by the NGOs and UN agencies in Uvira.

Rehabilitation and development

The majority of humanitarian programmes in the Uvira and Fizi zones apart from the repatriation operation are for rehabilitation of structures and systems - anything from fishing to mushroom farming. Aid agencies are trying to repair damage done both by the war and by the presence of about 220,000 refugees in camps north of Uvira until late 1996. UNHCR has committed about $6.7 million for rehabilitation programmes in the area, and currently has a portfolio of about 60 projects under way. Some projects not directly related to the repatriation have been put on hold, pending clarification of relations between UNHCR and the DRC government. Activites by NGOs include: rehabilitation of health centres and hospitals, electricity and water systems, bridges and roads and markets. Other sectors covered are: health education and training, sanitation, agriculture and livestock development, fisheries, credit schemes, vocations training and reforestation.

CONCLUSION

The irony of the victory of the ADFL is that the rebellion that began to protect the Banyamulenge of South Kivu has resulted in what local people agree is a spread of anti-Tutsi feeling. Opponents point to the strategic appointment of Banyamulenge administrators, commanders and other officials and complain of a young and inexperienced military. Aid agencies are working in a highly-charged political environment.

A regional analyst familiar with local Congolese NGOs told IRIN today that there is a lack of "space" for communities to find common ground and that the "fluid" situation is potentially dangerous for the DRC and the region as a whole. He says peace efforts are concentrating on "confidence-building", and urges a thorough examination of the causes of the inter-ethnic tension, which date back at least to the 1960s.

The only unifying theme among various armed threats to the ADFL government in the Kivus seems to be a rejection of Banyamulenge and Tutsi influence of any kind. The tension is also present within the DRC military. The Tutsi of South Kivu continue to look east for protection. The explosive mixture of Interahamwe, ex-FAZ, ex-Rwandan army, Burundian rebels and ethnically-based militia ranged against ADFL, Rwandan and possibly Burundian governmental troops has the potential for an alarming and long-running conflict. ADFL officials say the conflict is fuelled and funded by "Mobutists" in exile. Kabila's own history shows that the mountains of South Kivu are an ideal hideout for guerilla activities.

The situation in South Kivu will be an important test of the coherence of the Alliance nationally, as well as the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions in the post-war period.

Nairobi, November 18 1997

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IRIN Update No. 317 for Central and Eastern Africa (Friday 19 December 1997)

UGANDA: Army pursues rebels in DRC

Ugandan troops have again entered the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in pursuit of rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). The official 'New Vision' daily reports that one of the ADF's bases was "annihilated" by a joint attack by Ugandan Army and DRC forces in the Kamango hills. An assortment of military hardware was also seized.

WFP appeals for victims of civil strife

WFP today launched an appeal for $12.8 million for emergency food aid to help victims of the conflict in northern Uganda. In the districts of Gulu and Kitgum, 257,600 Ugandans are displaced, and WFP is seeking to supply them with 21,044 mt of food in the six-month period before the next harvest. In the latest reported attack, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) abducted five youths from Koro area, eight km east of Gulu town, on Tuesday, accoring to the Ugandan 'Monitor' today.

Cholera outbreak continues

The number of cholera cases in Kampala has risen to 214, medical officials told the 'New Vision' today. "The crisis has not yet been contained", the paper quotes a Mulago hospital official saying.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: UN human rights team held up again

Referring to the latest delays in the work of the UN human rights investigation team in DRC, UN Spokesman Juan Carlos Brandt said yesterday that the next few days would be "critical for establishing some kind of definite solution to this impasse." The team withdrew from Mbandaka and Wendji in northwestern DRC this week after large protest demonstrations by local people. PANA reported DRC's ambassador to the UN, Andre Kapanga, saying on Wednesday that the protests were in reaction to the killings of Congolese refugees at Mudende in Rwanda. Demands for money and other items from the team were made so that customary rituals could be performed prior to the exhumation of bodies, he said.

Human rights organization says situation "dangerous"

Human Rights Watch (HRW) claimed in a report released yesterday that the political and civil situation in the Congo is "dangerous for the average Congolese". The report, which covers the DRC government's human rights performance since taking over power in May 1997, alleges that the government has failed to respect rights of association, assembly and expression and calls for reforms in the actions of the judiciary and security services. HRW states that the government has not integrated its forces under a "unifed command structure" and that clashes within the military have led to the deaths of civilians.

RWANDA: US official calls for better security for refugees

David Scheffer, US ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues, who has been in northwestern Rwanda on behalf of US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright reported a "marked failure" on the part of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) to protect the refugees attacked at Mudende camp during the night of December 10. State Department spokesman James Rubin said in a statement yesterday that Scheffer had determined that 327 refugees were killed during the attack, and that it was probably launched by ex-FAR and Interahamwe from the DRC. Scheffer's report also indicates that 460 prisoners may have been freed from the local cachot (communal lockup), about 1.5 km from the camp during the raid. The work of the Gisenyi hospital, treating 267 severly wounded people from the attack he described as "heroic". Scheffer was also taken to the caves at Kanama, north of Gisenyi, to check allegations of killings of civilians there by the RPA earlier in the year. He reports that the RPA say 60-120 insurgents were pursued into the caves on October 26 and 27. While there are "some dead bodies" in the caves, the report continues, "there is no visible evidence that there were mass killings of hundreds or thousands" of Rwandan citizens as alleged by non-governmental sources.

Amnesty issues new report

Amnesty International has released a new report on Rwanda which documents alleged human rights abuses both by armed insurgents and the RPA. It includes an account of the events at the Kanama caves, which it describes as a massacre of civilians sheltering there. It also alleges that a "massive reprisal operation" took place on 11 December, the morning after the Mudende massacre, in which Tutsi civilians and the RPA "indiscriminately and systematically" killed unarmed Hutu civilians. "The gravity and brutality of killings by one side can never justify reporsals against civilians by the other side," the report states. As one of many recommendations in today's report, which updates another published on September 25 entitled 'Ending the Silence', Amnesty criticizes foreign governments close to the Rwandese government for their "prolonged inaction and refusal to recognize the gravity of the human rights situation".

RWANDA-DRC: Tripartite meeting held with UNHCR

The governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda met with UNHCR representatives in Gisenyi, northwestern Rwanda yesterday. According to Radio Rwanda, agreement was reached in principle on the voluntary repatriation of the Congolese refugees in Rwanda. But a UNHCR spokesperson told IRIN today that it is evaluating more secure and appropriate temporary sites to house the refugees within Rwanda while elements of the repatriation are prepared on both sides of the border. Several hundred refugees trying to cross back into DRC returned to Rwanda on Wednesday night after encountering groups of hostile local Congolese people at the border.

KENYA: UNHCR launches airlift

UNHCR announced today it had started an airlift to deliver emergency relief to 123,000 refugees stranded in Kenya's northeastern camps. The camps have been cut off since late November when heavy rains cut roads into the region. WFP had launched an airlift on 10 December for flood-stricken Kenyans in the northeast and WFP's first flight to bring food for refugees landed earlier this week. UNHCR estimates that roads cannot be re-opened before February at the earliest.

GREAT LAKES: Representative of the UN Secretary-General endorsed

Berhanu Dinka has been endorsed as the UN Secretary-General's Representative and Regional Humanitarian Advisor for the Great Lakes region. The UN Security Council has agreed with proposals put forward by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on 12 December, which also redefine the role of Mohamed Sahnoun. Sahnoun will act as Annan's Special Envoy in Africa on an "as and when employed basis".

UN Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal for the Great Lakes update

Of a total requirement of US $324.5 million for 1997, UN agencies have received funds of US $280 million. Other programmes, falling outside of the appeal, including activities in Rwanda, the work of NGOs and the Red Cross, have received US $228 million, according to figures provided by donors to DHA's Financial Tracking Unit.

Nairobi, December 19 1997, 15:00 GMT

[ENDS]

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Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Update 335 for 17-19 Jan 98.1.19

U N I T E D N A T I O N S Department of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 335 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 17-19 January 1998)

RWANDA: Interahamwe kill 35 in Gisenyi attack

Interahamwe militia today (Monday) killed 35 people when they ambushed a bus carrying workers of the Rwanda Breweries Company in Gisenyi. The Rwanda News Agency said the attackers attempted to separate the employees along ethnic lines, but upon being discovered they opened fire indiscriminately and set the bus alight. Security forces were combing the area looking for possible survivors.

Four soldiers get death sentence for killing commander

Four Rwandan soldiers were sentenced to death on Friday after their appeals were overturned by a military court in Gitarama. They were charged with killing their commanding officer, Captain Theoneste Hategekimana, last year in the Gitarama-Kibuye region. The four were appealing life sentences handed down last November, but Friday's hearing ruled the sentences were insufficient punishment and issued the death penalty. Hategekimana was a member of the former Rwandan army, but was integrated into the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA). Another soldier was publicly executed on Saturday in Ruhengeri to deter crime among the military, Rwandan radio reported. The soldier confessed to killing a veterinary surgeon in Kigombe commune in order to steal his motorbike, the radio said.

Mental health service to be overhauled

Rwanda is to overhaul its mental health service to help survivors of the 1994 genocide come to terms with the trauma, AFP reported. It quoted a health ministry official, Logan Ndahiro, as saying many patients were suffering from psychosomatic conditions without being aware of the fact. Since 1995, the national traumology centre in Kigali has been training "social agents" to identify the most serious cases throughout the country and try and treat them.

Private airline launched

A private airline was launched in Rwanda last week aimed at easing air links for the landlocked country. Rwanda Airlines, owned by businessman Charles Ngarambe, signified an "unprecedented step" in breaking the country's isolation, the Rwanda News Agency reported. Ngarambe said the company had a BAC 78-seater jet which he would use to undercut other airlines operating in the region.

BURUNDI: More rebel attacks north of Bujumbura

Heavy weapons' fire rocked areas north of Bujumbura over the weekend. Burundi radio said rebels attacked the areas of Gasenyi, Gikungu and Gihosha on Sunday morning. Seven rebels were reported killed as the army repulsed the attack. Three soldiers and a civilian were injured, the radio added. Hundreds of people fled into the surrounding countryside. Local people said the attack had been expected "because so many offences had been committed in the area over the past few days". According to Burundian officials, the situation later returned to normal as the rebels retreated into the hills.

Army spokesman Colonel Isaie Nibizi, speaking on Radio France Internationale, said the fighting followed a rebel attack on a military post at Gikongo. He described the incident as minor, lasting some 30 minutes. AFP said about 500 people had sought refuge in the Johnson and Le Gentil camps, five km north of Bujumbura.

Government to attend peace talks

Foreign Minister Luc Rukingama said the Burundi government would attend a forthcoming meeting in Arusha, Tanzania to discuss the peace process in his country. The delegation would ask for lifting the sanctions on Burundi, as well as discussing troubled relations with Tanzania. According to Rwandan radio, the meeting is due to be held this week. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Pascal-Firmin Ndimira on Saturday met visiting US presidential envoy, Howard Wolpe.

KENYA: Flood death, disease toll rises

The death toll from torrential rain and floods reached at least 86 on Saturday, Kenyan television reported. Deputy Police Commissioner Geoffrey Mwathe said over 2,300 families in the northeastern Garissa area were displaced after the Tana river burst its banks. He also warned of a potential locust invasion, after large swarms were sighted on the Kenyan-Ethiopian border. WHO, in a press release on Friday, said Rift Valley fever which was reported in Northeastern Province, had now appeared in other parts of the country and neighbouring Somalia. In Kenya, parts of Eastern, Rift Valley, Central and Coast provinces are affected, including some national parks. Some 300 people have died of the disease in Kenya and WHO reports a similar number of deaths in Somalia. Malaria and cholera are not playing as great a role in the number of deaths as had been previously reported, but famine has been a significant cause of death.

Chaos as part of Nairobi-Mombasa road washed away

The main Nairobi-Mombasa road, a lifeline for regional transport, was impassable over the weekend as rains washed away a crucial bridge. According to Kenyan press reports, a 30 km jam built up on both sides of the bridge and hundreds of trucks bringing goods to and from Zambia, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda were bogged down in mud. By today, the highway was partially reopened after engineers repaired a section of the affected area.

TANZANIA: Minister warns of famine threat

Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister Paul Kimiti on Friday warned of the potential threat of famine due to heavy rains which had increased the numbers of vermin and insects attacking food crops. He told a donor meeting in Dar es Salaam food availability would be greatly reduced. Armyworms, rodents and locusts were destroying thousands of hectares of land across the country, he said. In Singida area alone, some 24,000 hectares had been affected. Worst-hit areas included Singida, Dodoma, Tabora, Lindi, Mtwara, Mbeya, Tanga and Morogoro.

UGANDA: 340 die from cholera

The state-owned 'New Vision' said yesterday (Sunday) at least 340 people had died from cholera since the first cases were reported last month. Another 6,574 people were said to be suffering from the disease in some 21 of Uganda's 43 administrative districts.

Rebels attack Kitgum refugee camp

NGO sources reported a rebel attack on the Acholpii refugee camp in the northern Kitgum district on Friday. The dawn attack, by members of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), occurred after two groups of rebels entered the area and began looting shops. Three refugees were wounded, one seriously. The same camp was attacked in July 1996 when 110 refugees were brutally killed. The sources point out that heightened rebel activity in the Kitgum district is seriously hampering humanitarian activities. UNHCR confirmed the latest attack on the camp which houses some 18,000 Sudanese refugees and described the incident as "unacceptable".

Since late December, some 400 refugees from Rwanda and DRC, have arrived in Uganda's Kisoro district which borders the two countries. UNHCR said there were a total of 27,600 registered Rwandan and Congolese refugees in the area, plus a further 3,000 "unofficial" refugees whom it was assisting on a humanitarian basis.

Rebels regrouping in DRC

On Friday, the 'New Vision' reported over 1,000 rebels from the West Nile Bank Front were regrouping with rebels from other countries in a national park in eastern DRC. It cited security sources who said officials in Kampala had urged the DRC authorities to investigate the massing of rebels at Garamba national park. SPLA deserters, ex-FAZ and ex-FAR members are said to be among the 5,000-strong group.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Tshisekedi rally barred

Opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi was prevented from holding a public meeting on Saturday after police blocked all access to the offices of his Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) party. AFP said party members had been urged to rally in front of the building. On Friday, Minister of State for Internal Affairs Gaetan Kakudji warned that the ban on political parties remained in force and violators would be brought before a military court.

Lumumba assassins to be pardoned

President Laurent-Desire Kabila announced on Saturday he would pardon those responsible for the murder of Patrice Lumumba, Congo's first post-independence prime minister. However, they would first have to come foward and ask for forgiveness, he said in speech to mark the 37th anniversary of Lumumba's assassination.

Ex-Zaire diamond miners forced home from Angola

Over 9,000 diamond miners who left the former Zaire for work in Angola have fled home following attacks by the Angolan army and former rebel group UNITA. News reports quoted the prospectors as saying they had come under constant attack by both sides in the Angolan conflict. AFP said the ex-Zaire diamond miners - many of whom left in the 1970s and who marketed part of their produce in Kinshasa through networks established between UNITA and the Mobutu regime - had been caught up in a regional shift of alliances.

SUDAN: Rebels report clash with government forces

Sudanese rebels say their forces have clashed with government troops southeast of Kassala in eastern Sudan. According to opposition radio, the attack occurred on 10 January. Three people died and a military vehicle was destroyed. The opposition National Democratic Alliance stressed its capability to inflict a "crushing defeat" on the Khartoum regime, the radio said.

Nairobi, 19 January 1998, 14:00 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Update No. 341 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 27 January 1998)

RWANDA: Refugees must come home, official says

The government has reiterated its desire that all Rwandan refugees should return home, the Rwanda News Agency reported. The chairman of the repatriation commission, Mr Kabayija, said the government would leave "no stone unturned" to ensure all refugees "whether innocent or not" returned to the country. RNA said he was reacting to reports that some 12,000 Rwandans in Congo-Brazzaville who refused to be repatriated. "The problem with these refugees is that the majority want to return, but there are ex-FAR groups intimidating them," he said. Blaming some aid agencies for "perpetuating" the refugee problem, he called on countries sheltering Rwandan refugees to "emulate the Gabonese authorities who used their country's resources to repatriate our nationals".

Issue of Burundi, DRC refugees to be discussed

AFP quoted Minister of Family and Women's Affairs Aloysia Inyumba as saying her government would soon hold round-table talks with UNHCR to discuss the situation of refugees from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. She said the refugees should be handled in a "more sustainable" way. "We have to be systematic in our decisions. One of the questions is how can refugees look after themselves."

BURUNDI: PALIPEHUTU warns of imminent attack on Bujumbura

The rebel group Parti pour la liberation du peuple hutu (PALIPEHUTU) has warned foreigners to leave Bujumbura "before it's too late", saying its objective is to take the city. In a press release, the organisation claimed its armed wing, the Forces nationales de liberation (FNL), was responsible for the New Year attack on Bujumbura airport. It said claims of responsibility by the other main rebel group, Conseil national pour la defense de la democratie (CNDD), were false. In its statement, PALIPEHUTU said it had moved its headquarters from Cibitoke to Bujumbura.

KENYA: Rift Valley killings continue

The killings in Kenya's Rift Valley continued as a further three deaths were reported yesterday (Monday) and the sphere of violence extended into Molo constituency. Kenyan television said the clashes, in Njoro division of Molo, also resulted in the torching of 60 homes. The television described the attackers as "unidentified people", but reports in today's (Tuesday) 'Daily Nation' said the victims recognised some of their assailants. At least 50 people have been killed in violence in nearby Laikipia district. A police spokesman said 11 people been arrested in connection with the incidents.

UGANDA: LRA rebels cross into Gulu

The state-owned 'New Vision' yesterday reported a group of Lord's Resistance Army rebels had crossed into Gulu from bases in Sudan. According to the newspaper, the incursion follows reports that LRA leader Joseph Kony had ordered the fresh abduction of youths from the Acholi and Lang'o areas of the district.

Museveni defends non-party system

President Yoweri Museveni, speaking at a ceremony to mark his 12 years in power yesterday, defended his non-party system of government. In a speech broadcast over Ugandan radio, he recalled the "haemorrhage" suffered by his country under previous regimes. His government's first priority had been to ensure the security of citizens. He pointed out the danger of multipartyism being "hijacked by tribalism".

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Bread tax scrapped

A three percent tax on the price of bread has been scrapped after warnings that it could lead to trouble in the country, AFP reported. The Federation of Enterprises of Congo said Finance Minister Ferdinand Tala-Ngai had decided to withdraw the tax, imposed by his predecessor Mawapanga Mwana Nanga. The Federation had contested the levy on the grounds it would have a punishing effect on a socially volatile sector.

Mining deals cancelled

The DRC government has cancelled mining research deals signed five months ago with 12 foreign companies, accusing them of "dragging their feet", Reuters reported yesterday. In a statement, the mines ministry announced that "exclusive research zones" granted to the companies "are retaken by the state". The statement also threatened to scrap preliminary agreements signed with other firms, giving them a 10 February deadline to start their field research work.

Health Minister visits Kapalata camp

DRC Health Minister, Jean-Baptiste Sondji, today visited Kapalata camp in Kisangani, where cholera has killed 255 people to date. The outbreak was first reported in mid-December after the most severe cases were transferred to Kisangani general hospital. The camp is a reeducation and instruction camp for Mai-Mai and ex-FAZ, and was housing some 7,000 people, most of them teenagers. Humanitarian sources told IRIN the minister listened to aid organisations involved in caring for the cholera victims. Some 30 percent of inmates are also said to be suffering from severe malnutrition and there is a risk the cholera epidemic may spread to Kisangani itself, the sources pointed out.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: Annan proposes new peacekeeping force

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan yesterday called for a UN peacekeeping force in CAR to take over from French-backed forces due to pull out soon. The current Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) was put in place in February 1997 to

ensure adherence to the peace deal aimed at ending a series of army mutinies. "The only viable option for the maintenance of stability in the Central African Republic appears to be the establishment and deployment of another peacekeeping operation by the international community," Annan said, according to Reuters.

GREAT LAKES: "Unprecedented" logistics steps taken

Damage to roads and railway lines from excessive rains and floods in Tanzania and Kenya have led to "alarmingly low" food aid stock levels in Rwanda and Burundi, WFP said today. Planned distributions have had to be drastically reduced as deliveries have dwindled to about half of the targets. A key stretch of railway from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma is cut, while the Mombasa to Uganda railway line, also used by WFP, is cut in eastern Uganda. WFP is establishing a variety of alternative routes, including moving food for Burundi via Zambia and Lake Tanganyika, and from Kenya to Uganda, Tanzania and beyond via Lake Victoria. A WFP spokesperson told IRIN today the use of such "unprecedented" supply routes is "a sign of the critical point which the operation has reached."

KENYA-SOMALIA: WFP appeals for US $12 million

Meanwhile, WFP today announced that its operations for 1.1 million flood victims in Kenya and Somalia were threatened by a lack of funding. WFP has already spent most of the US $5.8 million received from donors so far in the operations which began in response to heavy rains battering the region since last October. A further US $12 million is needed to keep operations running until the end of March. WFP is operating a fleet of aircraft and boats which has so far delivered 4,500 mt of food, medicines, shelter and other supplies.

Note to Subscribers: DHA becomes OCHA

The United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), as part of its reform, has officially become the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Mr Sergio Vieira de Mello, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, assumed his functions in New York as head of OCHA in January 1998. He will be assisted by Mr Martin Griffiths, Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Nairobi, 27 January 1998, 14:25 gmt

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IRIN Update No. 342 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 28 January 1998)

BURUNDI: Defence minister killed in helicopter crash

The Burundi authorities have confirmed the death of Defence Minister Firmin Sinzoyiheba in a helicopter crash today (Wednesday). Three other people were also reported killed. The crash reportedly occurred in bad weather as the minister was returning to Bujumbura from a reconciliation meeting in Gitega between various parties in the Burundi conflict. The helicopter went down in the Gihinga mountains in Muramvya province. Burundi leaders are due to hold an emergency meeting later today.

The three-day reconciliation conference in Gitega was due to bring together various political players in Burundi, the Agence burundaise de presse (ABP) reported. President Pierre Buyoya was to open the meeting to be attended by the government, army, national assembly, trade unions and representatives of political parties. Regional observers, however, said little real progress was expected from the meeting.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: 21 people executed in Kinshasa

Twenty-one people accused of murder and armed robbery were executed by firing squad at the Tshatshi military camp in Kinshasa yesterday, DRC radio reported today. It said the victims were both civilians and soldiers whose appeals were rejected by President Laurent-Desire Kabila. News reports pointed out these were the first mass executions in the capital since Kabila took power. In a statement, the military tribunal which issued the sentences said the executions should be seen "as a solemn warning to any potential delinquent..."

Kabila blames Mai-Mai for Kivu insecurity

Kabila met local leaders in Bukavu on Monday during which they discussed the security situation in South Kivu. DRC radio broadcasting from Bukavu reported Kabila as saying tension in the area had been exacerbated by the "Mai-Mai phenomenon". He described the Mai-Mai as a "rebel movement against the established power".

Meningitis outbreak in Tembo

Forty people died of meningitis between 16 and 19 January in the Tembo mining area of DRC's Bandundu province, according to the World Health Organisation. A total of 87 cases were registered in that period. WHO pointed out that since the beginning of January, some 9,000 Congolese diamond miners and their families returned to the area from the Angolan province of Lunda Norte after being expelled by the Angolan army and UNITA. Spanish nuns working in the region have reported the outbreak of a mysterious viral disease which has killed dozens of miners in Tembo.

KENYA: Rift Valley violence escalates

The Kenyan government has issued a statement condemning "acts of lawlessness and irresponsibility" in Rift Valley province where over 70 people have been killed in ethnic clashes. Police announced that the death toll in the Njoro-Molo area had risen to 22, while in nearby Laikipia 55 bodies had so far been recovered. According to the government statement, security forces had been despatched to the affected areas and the situation in Njoro, Molo and Elementeita districts was under control. Seventeen suspects had been arrested and one was shot dead while resisting arrest. KTN television said the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) however, criticised "laxity" in containing the clashes.

Agriculture Minister warns of massive food shortfall

Agriculture Minister Musalia Mudavadi said yesterday adverse weather conditions meant Kenya would register a shortfall of seven million bags (630,000 mt) of maize. A further 3.3 million bags (297,000 mt) of beans and one million bags (90,000 mt)of wheat would be lost. Over 300,000 families countrywide had been affected by the floods which washed away their homes and destroyed their crops. The minister added there had been an abnormally high incidence of livestock diseases as a result of the weather. Australia announced it would donate $Aus seven million to WFP for relief operations in Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan. One million dollars will be used for Kenya, according to an Australian press release.

RWANDA: Zimbabwe to train security forces

Zimbabwe is to help train the Rwandan security forces, including the army and police, in accordance with a protocol signed between the two countries yesterday, AFP reported. Rwandan Minister of State for Defence Emmanuel Habyarimana, who is on a visit to Harare, said Zimbabwe would be seen as a pioneer in the process to restore peace and stability to Rwanda. Zimbabwe's Defence Minister Moven Mahachi said his country was assisting Rwanda because it wanted to see peace prevail there and in the region.

New airline starts operating in March

Rwanda's new airline, Alliance Express, will start operating from 1 March, the Rwanda News Agency reported. The airline - a merger between the national carrier Air Rwanda and a regional carrier Alliance Air - will link Kigali with major regional cities, notably Entebbe, Nairobi, Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Dar es Salaam and Johannesburg.

ANGOLA: MONUA mandate to be extended

The UN Security Council yesterday voted to extend the mandate of UN peacekeepers in Angola by three months. The 2,000-strong observer mission, MONUA, was due to withdraw at the end of this month. Yesterday's resolution provides for retaining up to 1,045 troops within the mission. In a report to the Council, Secretary-General Kofi Annan had described the situation in Angola as "precarious". The resolution called on the Angolan government and "in particular" the former rebel movement UNITA to comply with the provisions of a 1994 peace accord.

ZAMBIA: Minister denies UNITA operating from Zambia

Zambia today denied reports that UNITA forces have military bases in the country, PANA news agency reported. Foreign Minister Keli Walubita described the allegations as "baseless", saying they were disseminated by people "bent on destroying" the friendly relations between Zambia and Angola. Zambia, he added, was committed to the Angolan peace process.

Burundian refugees arrive

Forty-four Burundian refugees have arrived in Zambia's Mwinilunga area, according to Zambian state radio. It quoted local sources as saying more were expected by the end of the week. The refugees are being screened by government authorities. One refugee said he had travelled through DRC and Angola into Zambia.

EAST AFRICA: Ministers to seek foreign help

Ministers from Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya will travel to Asia, Europe and the USA next week to seek aid and investment to rebuild the region's road network, Reuters reported. Tanzanian Foreign Minister Jakaya Kikwete told a news conference in Nairobi today the trip, under the umbrella of the East African Cooperation forum, would take in Japan, Belgium, the USA and Britain. Kikwete said repairing the regional road network was a priority for the three nations.

Ogata to visit

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata will travel to Africa on 5 February where she will visit nine countries and meet African leaders. UNHCR said the main focus of the trip would be the Great Lakes region, and would include refugee and reintegration issues. The countries to be visited are Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, DRC, Congo-Brazzaville and Ethiopia.

Nairobi, 28 January 1998, 14:40 gmt

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IRIN Update No. 344 for Central and Eastern Africa (Friday 30 January 1998)

SUDAN: Army denies rebels control Wau

The Sudanese army has denied rebel claims that they have taken Wau, the second largest town in southern Sudan. An army statement yesterday (Thursday) said troops had repelled a "desperate attack" by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) on Wau, "teaching the traitors and agents a lesson they will not forget". However SPLA leader John Garang, in an interview with the BBC said fighting was still continuing 24 hours after his forces launched yesterday's dawn attack. According to Garang, a former ally Kerubino Kwanyan Bol, who earlier defected to the government, had now rejoined the SPLA and was commanding the attack on Wau.

UGANDA: Rebel raids reported in north

Rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have carried out a series of raids in northern Uganda, according to local press reports. The independent 'Monitor' paper said on Tuesday a group of rebels overran an army unit in Lira district, burned a school hospital and looted drugs. Earlier, they had attacked Agweng parish on the Lira-Kitgum road and abducted 30 people. Security sources, quoted by AFP, denied the situation in the region was serious, saying the attacks were due to a small groups of roving bandits.

Rebels surrender to army

The state-owned 'New Vision' said yesterday 68 rebels of the little-known Uganda National Rescue Front-2 had surrendered to the army over the last two weeks in the northwest Arua district. The group has bases in southern Sudan, occasionally striking the West Nile region of northwest Uganda. It is a splinter from the West Nile Bank Front rebel group.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Kakudji warns Burundi, Rwanda rebels

Minister of State for Internal Affairs Gaetan Kakudji has accused rebels from Burundi and Rwanda of establishing rear bases in eastern DRC. Speaking on return to Kinshasa from a visit to Bukavu earlier this week, he said he had been on a "pacification mission". "We have decided to ensure there is no more war as in the past," Kakudji told reporters. "It is intolerable that these elements should export their war to our country". President Laurent-Desire Kabila, who was in Bukavu yesterday (Thursday), accused France and two aid agencies of aiding Mai-Mai rebels in eastern DRC.

Traditional chiefs arrested

The authorities in South Kivu on Tuesday arrested two traditional chiefs, Mwami Desire Kabare Rugemaninzi of Kabare and Mwami Pierre Ndatabaye Weza III of Ngweshe, accusing them of involvement with Mai-Mai rebels. Meanwhile, the brother of Kabila's former military adviser Masasu Nindaga has been sentenced to 20 years' hard labour by a military court. Justin Nindaga was found guilty of inciting mutiny last year among troops in Bukavu, AFP said, citing state radio. Masasu was himself arrested last November and charged with drug trafficking, although regional observers commented the arrest was due to rivalry within the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL).

Kapalata camp to be closed

The DRC authorities yesterday announced the Kapalata military camp in Kisangani would be closed after some 300 deaths from cholera. Health Minister Jean-Baptiste Sondji told Reuters, after visiting the camp, he personally took the decision to close it. The camp houses young Mai-Mai fighters who have been living there in cramped and unsanitary conditions. They will be transferred to an unfinished hospital building in Kisangani.

Remaining refugees to be repatriated from Kinkole

UNHCR is repatriating several hundred Congo-Brazzaville refugees remaining at the Kinkole camp outside Kinshasa. When the last refugees are moved to Brazzaville by mid-February, UNHCR plans to close down the Kinkole camp. The camp hosted some 10,000 refugees during last year's civil war in Congo-Brazzaville.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Sporadic shooting heard

Sporadic shooting was heard overnight Wednesday and Thursday in Brazzaville, Reuters said in a report from Kinshasa. It said residents the gunfire on disgruntled former militia fighters seeking to be incorporated into the army.

BURUNDI: Bagaza trial postponed

The trial of former president Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, due to open yesterday, has been postponed, AFP reported. Bagaza, leader of the pro-Tutsi Parti pour le redressement national (PARENA), is accused of plotting to kill President Pierre Buyoya. PARENA opposes any attempts to negotiate with Hutu rebel groups.

KENYA: Rift Valley violence contained, police say

Police commissioner Duncan Wachira yesterday said the violence in Njoro in Rift Valley province had been contained, with some 64 suspects under arrest. The 'Daily Nation' today (Friday) quoted the commissioner as saying the death toll in ethnic clashes had increased to 37. The newspaper reported that the violence was spreading to the Mau-Narok area of the province, with the latest discovery of two bodies there.Rift Valley Provincial Commissioner Nicholas Mberia described the scene as "devastating". "I am now fully aware there is a big problem in Mau Narok and I assure you the government will do everything possible to stamp out the violence," he said, according to the "Daily Nation'. Meanwhile, Kenya's reform lobby

the National Convention Executive Council (NCEC) yesterday urged Kenyans to "arm and form village self-defence groups against aggression".

US plane sends aid to northeast

A military cargo plane, provided by the US, began an airlift of emergency relief supplies to northeast Kenya yesterday, according to a US embassy statement. The plane and a US military Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team were sent to Kenya following meetings last week between US and Kenyan officials. The C-130 plane will continue delivering emergency supplies to flood victims until next week.

Nairobi, 30 January 1998, 13:35 gmt

[ENDS]

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Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Update 351 for 10 Feb 98.2.10

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IRIN Update No. 351 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 10 February 1998)

RWANDA: Rebels massacre 58 in Gisenyi

Hutu rebels massacred 58 people and wounded 64 in northwest Gisenyi prefecture last week, the Rwanda News Agency (RNA) reported yesterday (Monday). It quoted local administrator Jean Baptiste Muhirwa as saying the rebels crossed from the Democratic Republic of Congo into the border village of Ngugo on Friday night during heavy rain. They broke into houses and began killing people with guns and traditional weapons.

Akayesu trial resumes with testimony by defence witness

The trial of genocide suspect Jean-Paul Akayesu resumed at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Rwanda yesterday. A defence witness for the former mayor of Taba in Gitarama prefecture testified that Akayesu was opposed to a group of Interahamwe militia from Taba and "tried to save Tutsis".

BURUNDI: Army flushing out rebels near Bujumbura

Residents of Bujumbura reported heavy weapons fire in the hills surrounding the city yesterday and Sunday, according to AFP. Army spokesman Colonel Isaie Nibizi said the army was conducting an offensive against "localised terrorists" in the area . "Armed bands never totally left the hills overlooking the capital," he told AFP, adding that the flushing out operations wound continue as long as armed gangs remained in the area.

Kenya Airways resumes flights to Bujumbura

Kenya Airways announced the commencement of humanitarian flights to Bujumbura, with the inaugural flight set for 17 February 1998. The once weekly flight will operate on Tuesdays.

Nyerere calls for democratically-elected government

Former Tanzanian president and Burundi mediator Julius Nyerere reiterated the only solution to Burundi's political crisis lay in a democratically-elected government, Tanzanian radio reported yesterday. During talks with UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, who is visiting Tanzania, he described the current government of President Pierre Buyoya as "undemocratic".

TANZANIA: Mkapa appeals for aid to rebuild damaged roads, railways

President Benjamin Mkapa has appealed for US $45 million in aid to rebuild Tanzania's roads and railways devastated by floods, local press reports said. Speaking to foreign envoys, he described the damage as "colossal". Internal and external trade had been badly hit, cutting government revenue.

Cargo held up in flood-hit ports

Over 150,000 mt of cargo, destined for Uganda and Rwanda, are held up at Tanzanian ports following the torrential rain. IPS news agency said the two countries were seeking alternative means of moving the stuck cargo. It quoted Tanzania Railways Corporation chief Linford Mboma as saying the TRC was losing some 100 million Tanzanian shillings (US $160,000) in revenue a day.

EAST AFRICA: FAO urges assistance to prevent epidemics

The Food and Agriculture Organisation said some 10 million people in East Africa were in need of emergency assistance following months of heavy rains which had caused havoc in the sub-region. Somalia and Kenya were particularly badly affected with a heavy loss of human and animal life. FAO today (Tuesday) appealed for US $2.5 million to help contain and combat diseases such as Rift Valley fever and rinderpest in the two countries. It warned that livestock diseases if left unchecked could develop into epidemic proportions.

WFP urges aid for flood victims

WFP also launched an appeal today, calling for US $17 million to maintain food deliveries and other vital supplies to over one million flood victims in Kenya and Somalia. Most deliveries have to be made by airdrops or boats because torrential rain has destroyed roads and bridges, WFP said in a press release.

WHO says Rift Valley fever waning in Kenya

WHO said Rift Valley fever was on the decline in Kenya. Epidemiologist Dr Mike Ryan told a news conference in Nairobi that 14 new cases had been reported over the last 10 days in the northeast, indicating the disease was being controlled. He said a team of WHO experts, based in Garissa, would try to establish the link between the disease and changes in weather conditions to make it easily predictable and preventable.

New UNEP boss notes hardships facing environmental issues

Former German environment minister Klaus Toepfer who took over as Executive Director of Nairobi-based UNEP yesterday warned that it would take "extraordinary efforts" to bring environmental issues "back to the centre of global political activity". He replaces Elizabeth Dowdeswell who held the post since 1993.

KENYA: IMF team arrives

A technical team from the IMF arrived in Nairobi on Sunday ahead of another mission expected later this week which will assess reform in Kenya. In July, the IMF froze a US $205 million Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility, citing the government's failure to combat high-level corruption. Economic observers told AFP the government had reneged on promised reforms and the talks would be "protracted and difficult".

SUDAN: World Vision warns of imminent disaster in Bahr el Ghazal

World Vision today warned of a looming "human tragedy" in southern Sudan following Khartoum's decision to ban aid flights to Bahr el Ghazal state. It said thousands of people displaced by fighting had arrived at its operation centres in Tonj and Gogrial where limited relief supplies were available. Continued fighting in Wau, Aweil and Gogrial was aggravating the crisis. World Vision's relief director for Sudan Bruce Menser described the flight ban as "abominable, criminal and unacceptable".

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Disgruntled militiamen on looting spree

Dozens of dissatisfied militiamen, loyal to current leader Denis Sassou-Nguesso during last year's civil war, went on the rampage in Brazzaville yesterday. Former Cobra militia fighters looted shops, especially in the northern Ouenze district, before riot police restored order, AFP reported. They were apparently protesting against being omitted from the ranks of the new security forces. State radio reported shooting in the Bacongo district, close to the Total market.

UGANDA: LRA rebels kill eight in ambush

Rebels belonging to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have killed eight people in an ambush on a pick-up truck in the northern Gulu district, the independent 'Monitor' newspaper reported yesterday. The vehicle was set ablaze near the town of Adak and the victims, including a three year-old boy, were bayonetted to death. Meanwhile, in the western Uganda, rebels from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) killed three villagers and wounded two over the weekend, the state-owned 'New Vision' said. The rebels were being chased away by a combined force of Ugandan and DRC soldiers, the newspaper added. About 1,000 villagers were displaced.

Nairobi, 10 February 1998, 14:30 gmt

[ENDS]

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by orion.sas.upenn.edu (8.8.8/8.8.8/SAS.04) with SMTP id KAA24326 for <aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu>; Wed, 11 Feb 1998 10:18:09 -0500 (EST) Received: (qmail 20441 invoked by uid 108); 11 Feb 1998 15:13:39 -0000 Received: (from majordom@localhost) by dha.unon.org (8.6.12/8.6.12) id RAA23676; Wed, 11 Feb 1998 17:52:34 +0300 Date: Wed, 11 Feb 1998 17:49:02 +0300 (GMT+0300) From: UN IRIN - Central and Eastern Africa <irin@dha.unon.org> To: irin-cea-updates@dha.unon.org Subject: Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Update 352 for 11 Feb 98.2.11 (fwd) Message-ID: <Pine.LNX.3.91.980211173839.23570A-100000@dha.unon.org> MIME-Version: 1.0 Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN; charset=US-ASCII Sender: owner-irin-cea-updates@dha.unon.org Precedence: bulk X-URL: http://www.reliefweb.int/emergenc Status: RO

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IRIN Update No. 352 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 11 February 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Aid workers return to Baraka after brief evacuation

UN and NGO staff returned to Baraka in eastern DRC today (Wednesday) after they were evacuated for at least two hours following an outbreak of fighting between different units of the army, humanitarian sources told IRIN. The early morning flare-up between rival elements was the first such incident since December. A group of returning refugees from Kigoma were also able to disembark after a short delay, the sources added. They said local authorities had assured UNHCR that "calm was restored" and they should continue with their operations as usual. Reuters reported that UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata, who is currently on an African tour, had watched the several hundred refugees board the ferry yesterday for the journey home across Lake Tanganyika.

UN says two investigators join Mbandaka advance team

Spokesman for the Secretary-General Fred Eckhard said that the human rights investigative mission to DRC had reported that two investigators had joined the advance team in Mbandaka on Sunday. The others remained in Kinshasa where they continued preparations for their deployment in the eastern part of DRC, he told reporters in New York on Tuesday. An advance preparatory team of five investigators left Kinshasa for the northwestern town of Mbandaka on Friday.

Kapalata to close finally at end of week

The Kapalata military camp near Kisangani is to be closed by the end of the week, according to a decision by the governor of Orientale province and the chief military doctor. UNICEF told IRIN today the move represented a common stance between the civilian and military authorities. The camp, which houses mostly children whom the authorities consider as Mai-Mai rebels, has been declared unfit for human habitation by aid agencies after about 300 inmates died from cholera and other diseases. Yesterday, 140 children were transferred from the camp to "site H" in Kisangani and another 250 are due to leave today. UNICEF said it seems the camp housed some 1,500 children rather than the 3,000 previously reported. Estimates indicate as many as 46 percent of the children are severely malnourished. Care is being provided by NGOs with medical supplies from UNICEF.

UGANDA: UNICEF say almost 1,300 abducted children from Kitgum still missing

UNICEF Uganda told IRIN today that 1,290 children from just one Ugandan district, Kitgum, have been abducted in the last two years by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and have not come back. Another 1,310 did manage to return, preliminary findings show. UNICEF has released initial figures for Kitgum district in a survey of abductions in seven northern and southwestern Ugandan districts. Results from other districts are expected in the coming weeks.

New figures show abductions may be higher than previously thought

UNICEF had earlier estimated a total of between 5,000 and 8,000 children had been abducted. The figures from Kitgum may indicate a much higher overall total. Some 80 percent of the children were between the ages of 12 and 18 when taken from schools, fields or while collecting water, but 11 percent were between only four and seven. The LRA uses children for slave labour, as fighters and as "wives" for their soldiers. "It's going to take years and years for these children to recover - a lot of them come back physically as well as mentally scarred," a UNICEF spokeswoman told IRIN today. The abuse continues - seven children were taken from one parish alone last week. The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), operating in southwestern Uganda, also abduct children, UNICEF says.

TANZANIA: Mkapa puts total El Nino cost at over US $100 million

Tanzania will need US $117.3 million to repair damage to infrastructure caused by three months of torrential rain blamed on the El Nino phenomenom, AFP reported President Benjamin Mkapa as telling parliament yesterday. The bill includes $17.2 million to repair major roads and $64.5 million to replace or repair houses. Repairs to railway lines are estimated at $18.3 million dollars and expected to take at least six months. Yesterday, AFP said trucks en route from Dar es Salaam to northwestern Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi were forced to detour via Kenya because of road damage, but were blocked at the border following a demand by Kenya they obtain customs bonds before crossing the country. Meanwhile, PANA reported Uganda would receive an emergency world bank loan of US $30 million to repair roads and bridges damaged by the rains in that country.

Zanzibar detainees appeal to Roman Catholic church

Seventeen members of Zanzibar's opposition charged with treason have appealed to Roman Catholic Cardinal Polycarp Pengo to intervene for their release, the Kiswahili daily 'Majira' reported. Quoting a letter dated 7 February from the accused to Pengo, which was smuggled out of the Zanzibar jail at the weekend, the newspaper said the accused asked the cardinal to appeal to President Benjamin Mkapa to intervene and to have the charges dropped and secure their release. The accused maintained in the letter that the charges were false and designed to prevent credible political opposition on the semi-autonomous islands of Zanzibar and Pemba.

Tanzania secures Ivory markets - IPS

IPS news agency reported from Dar es Salaam that Tanzania had secured markets in China and Japan to dispose of its stockpile of 80 tonnes of elephant tusks. The country, which has stocks worth an estimated US $20 million, is therefore expected to be one of the first to take advantage of last year's lifting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, Flora and Fauna (CITES) ban on exports.

KENYA: At least 354 die in highland malaria epidemic

At least 354 people have died in two weeks in a highland malaria epidemic sweeping western Kenya's Nyanza province, Reuters reported yesterday. The news agency quoted District Medical Administrators Morris Ope and Andrew Nyamweya as saying dozens of people were dying daily and the outbreak had reached "epidemic proportions." The doctors said their figures covered the period between 26 January and 9 February. During that time they had also seen more than 6,946 patients tested positive with highland malaria.

RWANDA: Tribunal lawyers demand better conditions

Lawyers defending suspects accused of war crimes during Rwanda's 1994 genocide are seeking improved work conditions at the Arusha UN tribunal set up to judge their cases, according to AFP. "We must fight to get the means to defend the suspects. We don't want to just appear to be defending our clients," the agency quoted Charles Tchoungang, a Cameroon lawyer who heads the association of defence lawyers at the tribunal, as saying.

ANGOLA: Elf announce another oil find off Angola

French oil group Elf Aquitaine has just made a new discovery in bloc 17 off Angola, in the wake of the discoveries of the big fields of Girassol and Dalia 1 and 2, the Oil Industry Bulletin reported on Tuesday. The new offshore well, called Rosa, reportedly displays a very promising flow, more than 10,000 barrels a day, the publication said. Last week, Total announced what it called an "encouraging" oil find off the Angola coast, its fourth discovery in the 2/92 block it operates.

Nairobi, 11 February 1998 14:30 GMT

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IRIN Update No. 355 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 14-16 February 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Tshisekedi flown home, media says whereabouts unknown

The government said arrested opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi was flown to his home village in the centre of Democratic Republic of the Congo on Friday to work on the land, but newspaper reports in Kinshasa today (Monday) said he had not arrived and his whereabouts were unknown. All the main newspapers in Kinshasa ran headlines saying Tshisekedi had still not arrived in Kabeya-Kamwanga. 'Le Potentiel' reported he was still somewhere in Kinshasa. In an open letter to the press, Tshisekedi's wife said that according to information she had received her husband was in Kinshasa and "has been tortured". Meanwhile, residents reported Kinshasa was buzzing with rumours that other opposition leaders who met US special envoy Jesse Jackson last week may also soon be arrested.

UDPS supporters demonstrate in Brussels

Meanwhile, supporters of his party, the Union pour la democratie et le progres social (UDPS), began a sit-in outside the US embassy in Brussels to protest his arrest. The government maintains the veteran opposition leader was arrested for violating a "ban on party political activities", but gave no other details. The arrest last Thursday took place after Tshisekedi met with Jackson, US President Bill Clinton's special envoy for democracy in Africa. DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila had earlier declined to meet Jackson, leading to intense speculation the meeting with Jackson was the reason for the opposition leader's detention.

DRC Agriculture Minister Mawampanga Mwana Nanga told a news conference in Kinshasa on Friday the government wished to use the veteran opposition leader's skills as a "leader of men" to contribute to the nutritional security of the region. "The compatriot E. Tshisekedi was flown aboard a jet chartered by the government on Friday to the commune of Kabeya-Kamwanga with a large quantity of seeds of corn, soya, peanut, rice and a motor-cultivator," he said. Interior Minister Gaetan Kakudji said in a statement read on state television that Tshisekedi had persistently broken a ban on party politics, but gave no other details.

Senior figure quits UN human rights team

A senior official investigating massacres in former Zaire has resigned, saying an independent and impartial UN inquiry into alleged human rights abuses has proven to be impossible. Quoting from his resignation letter, AFP reported Zimbabwean jurist Andrew Chigovera, deputy head of the probe, as saying: "I have great difficulties in believing that an environment conducive to the conduct of a proper, independent and impartial human rights investigation exists or that it will ever present itself." The on-off UN investigative mission has been embroiled in several disputes with the DRC government, but last week Spokesman for the Secretary-General Fred Eckhard said an advance team had finally been able to start work in the northwestern town of Mbandaka - one site of an alleged massacre. Jose Diaz, the mission's spokesperson in Kinshasa, told IRIN today the resignation was effective from the end of this month and said it was regrettable. He said the mission's work was continuing and they hoped shortly to start investigations in eastern DRC.

Mobutu's wife loses appeal

Meanwhile, the wife of the late Zairean dictator Mobutu Sese Seko has lost an appeal against a decision by the Swiss authorities to help the new DRC government track down the country's missing and looted assets, news organisations reported last week. According to the Swiss supreme court, a decision to freeze Mobutu's assets in Swiss banks does not cause an "irreparable prejudice to his heirs" as it is temporary, pending investigations. "In a judicial cooperation procedure, only decisions which cause an immediate and irreparable prejudice can be subjected to an appeal" stated the judgement, dated 28 January, but published only last week. Kinshasa has also stepped up attempts to extradite senior figures of Mobutu's former government from South Africa where they are seeking asylum. Among other charges, they are accused of expropriation of the country's funds.

RWANDA: Kagame becomes ruling party boss

Rwandan military leader and Vice-President Paul Kagame has been elected head of the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), AFP reported today. It said a weekend meeting of the party made Kagame chairman late on Sunday "after a close vote" and two days of intensive talks, which also saw the renewal of the whole party's leading body. Meanwhile, the Rwandan government has announced the creation of a national commission to inform the national and international public about the situation in the country, which has been facing an increasingly-serious insurgency by Hutu rebels in the northwest. The independent Rwandan news agency, RNA, said the commission would be chaired by Foreign Affairs Minister Anastase Gasana.

BURUNDI: Ogata announces tripartite commission

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata said on Saturday her agency would help set up a tripartite commission aimed at facilitating voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees in Tanzania. "We will help set up a mechanism for consultation between Burundi, Tanzania and ourselves," Ogata told reporters at the end of a three-day visit to Burundi. "We will be the facilitator to see...at the technical level, what exactly can be done to help bring people, who want to come, back to Burundi," she added.

EAST AFRICA: Summit set to review sanctions policy

Diplomatic sources confirmed to IRIN today weekend press reports a summit of regional heads of state would take place in the Ugandan capital Kampala on 21 January to review the crisis in Burundi and sanctions imposed on that country by its neighbours. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni is due to present a report to fellow regional leaders on a number of issues related to the sanctions policy. Meanwhile, Kenya Airways plans to resume tomorrow weekly relief and diplomatic carrier flights to Burundi's capital Bujumbura in spite of the embargo.

UGANDA: Hospitals short of blood

Following recent El-Nino-induced epidemics of malaria, cholera, and other fevers in the last three months, Uganda's cash-strapped hospitals are facing serious shortages of blood, the 'EastAfrican' newspaper today quoted health officials as saying. The weekly reported demand for blood had tripled since November with most of it needed for malaria victims, mainly women and children with low immunity levels.

Troops deployed along Sudan border

Uganda has deployed troops along the border with Sudan to block Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels from abducting captives. The 'New Vision' reported today the deployment followed the recent incursion into Kitgum from Sudan of 200 LRA fighters, led by Joseph Kony.

SUDAN-EGYPT: Egyptian premier arrives in Khartoum

Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal al-Ganzuri arrived in Khartoum on Friday to offer his condolences over the death of Sudan's first vice-president in a plane crash. The visit was the first by an Egyptian premier since ties between the two neighbours deteriorated in the early 1990s. Sudan's Vice President Al Zubair Mohammed Saleh and 25 others died when their plane crash landed on Thursday at Nasir, 800 km south of Khartoum, state television said.

Meanwhile, river traffic between the two countries resumed on Saturday after a four-year suspension, Sudan's official news agency reported. A joint technical committee recently signed an agreement on transport along the Nile aimed at improving relations.

SUDAN: Human Rights Watch condemns summary executions

Human Rights Watch has condemned the alleged use by Khartoum of summary public trials to punish political dissidents. In a statement on Thursday, the Washington-based rights group said the use of "very summary courts to punish government opponents who seek to exercise their free expression and free association rights ... makes a travesty of justice." The statement also voiced concern over reports indicating that since the government of President Omar el-Beshir came to power in 1989, some 100 people have been sentenced to death and executed.

Concern over conditions in Wau

In the same statement, Human Rights Watch called on Khartoum to allow relief supplies to reach between 100,000 and 150,000 people in dire need of assistance in the south, especially around Wau, the second largest town in the region. Meanwhile, the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) claimed on Saturday it had killed 768 government troops in an offensive on Wau launched at the end of January. SPLA spokesman Yasir Arman told Reuters in Addis Ababa that government forces held the town's airport while the SPLA were in control of several suburbs. There has been no independent confirmation of the claim.

TANZANIA: Police and Moslem militants clash

At least two people are believed to have died in clashes on Friday between the police and Muslim fundamentalists, the privately-owned Independent Television reported. The clashes began after police moved in to quell riots started by fundamentalists protesting against the arrest of one of their leaders who was among nine others arraigned in court for defying a government order prohibiting public sermons insulting other religions, the television said.

IMF down plays threat of debt default

A threat by the Tanzanian government to suspend debt repayments is being played down by the IMF. AFP reported the fund's senior Tanzanian official as saying today that he doubted the government, which has been "consistently responsible", would default. Last week, President Benjamin Mkapa threatened to suspend servicing the country's US $8 billion external debt until flood damage across the country was repaired.

Nairobi 16 February 1998 15:30 GMT

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IRIN Update No. 357 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 18 February 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Kabila says peace precondition for elections

DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila has rejected pressure to hold elections until "peace prevails". Speaking on state-controlled television on Monday, Kabila said the country was awash with guns, "that is why we have decided to ban political activities, so that people don't shoot at one another." In the broadcast, monitored by the BBC, Kabila said a census would be held by August of this year and a referendum on a draft constitution by October. Elections would then follow, but he set no date.

Kabila defended his decision to send opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi to his home village, saying he was "happy" there. "When political activities kick off just after the transitional period ... he can come back and resume his political activities if he so desires," he added.

Uvira calm after clashes

Calm has returned to Uvira after clashes between government soldiers and unidentified armed assailants early yesterday morning. According to humanitarian sources, heavy firing was heard in the northern and southern quarters of the town. One source, quoting a military officer, said Burundi rebels attempting to cross Lake Tanganyika were ambushed by the army.

ANGOLA: Dos Santos-Savimbi meeting stalled over security arrangements

Disagreement over the security detail for Angolan former rebel leader Jonas Savimbi is blocking plans for his meeting with President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, AFP reported. Discussions between UNITA and the government continued yesterday in Luanda. Agreement has been reached on the proposal to reduce the 400 men Savimbi is allowed as bodyguards over the next nine months to no more than 150. But a spokeswoman for the UN Angolan peacekeeping mission told IRIN today (Wednesday) that the sticking point is the "guards' distribution". The government insists that only 50 would be allowed in Luanda, while UNITA demands a larger contingent, or an exemption "under special circumstances". According to the spokeswoman, the issue is important as the "UNITA leadership will have to move to Luanda before 28 February," the deadline agreed by both sides in a revised peace timetable.

She also pointed out that according to the timetable, demobilisation of UNITA residual forces is due to conclude by 26 February. However, 3,000 UNITA men out of 7,877 remain to be processed. She said demobilisation "has been advancing quite fast, and I think it's feasible."

Attacks mount by armed men in southwest

Six people were killed and four wounded in a machine-gun attack on Friday on a coach travelling along the Luanda-Benguela road, 60 km from the southwestern port of Lobito, the state daily Journal d'Angola reported today. In a separate incident, four people, three of them police officers, reportedly died at the weekend in an attack blamed on former UNITA rebels in Benguela Province. Local radio said four other people were wounded in the raid, the first such incident linked to UNITA since the beginning of the year. The radio said two other people were killed in a blast along the road connecting the towns of Lukapa and Kalukul in the northeast. It added that several people had also been killed in an attack blamed on UNITA near the northeast town of Xamuteba.

According to the MONUA spokeswoman, "there's been a slight increase in the number of allegations and incidents verified. But I can't say there's an atmosphere of instability."

BURUNDI: CNDD pulls out of talks

The Hutu rebel Conseil national pour la defence de la democratie (CNDD) has pulled out of negotiations with the regime of Pierre Buyoya, AFP reported. In a statement on Tuesday from Brussels, CNDD spokesman Jerome Ndiho said the rebels "from today suspend their participation in the negotiating process until the genocidal leadership of Bujumbura publicly desists from the massacre of innocent civilians." Uganda was planning to host a regional summit on Burundi in Kampala on Saturday. The summit was expected to review regionally-imposed sanctions against Burundi.

Kenya Airways resumes flights to Burundi

Kenya Airways yesterday resumed its flights to Bujumbura as part of a planned weekly service, the airline said. An official told IRIN that the airline had received official clearance to cross Tanzanian airspace.

GREAT LAKES: EU food aid arrives

A 25,000 ton consignment of EU-donated maize for WFP's emergency operations in the Great Lakes region landed at Mombasa port yesterday. The donation, valued at US $10.7 million including transport costs, will provide a maize ration for 1.4 million people for one and a half months, a WFP statement said. WFP's 1998 food requirement for the region is 250,000 tons. The 25,000 tons of maize will be divided amongst WFP operations in four countries: Rwanda (16,312 MT), Uganda (3,000 MT), Burundi (5,186 MT), and Democratic Republic of Congo (502 MT). Due to flood damage to transport links, "the challenge now will be to transport the food in-land," Allen Jones, Regional Manager for WFP's Great Lakes operation said.

Meanwhile, security along the Mombasa-Nairobi highway has been increased to protect cargo held up along the flood-damaged road, the 'Daily Nation' reported today. "When we feel we cannot cope with the situation, we shall close the road again and advise transporters to use alternative means," a police spokesman said.

UGANDA: New military reshuffle

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni on Tuesday replaced army commander Major General Mugisha Muntu with Major General Jeje Adong. Army public relations officer Shaban Bantazira told AFP the latest reshuffle involved more than 10 appointments. These included the elevation of former chief of combat operations Brigadier Joram Mugume to deputy army commander, while former director of military intelligence, Colonel

Tole, was made chief of operations for training.

TANZANIA: Cholera claims 108 in southern highland region

At least 27 people have died from cholera in Tanzania's southern highland region of Iranga between 6 January and 12 February this year, state-owned radio Tanzania reported yesterday. The radio said the new deaths brought to 108 the total number of fatalities since the disease broke out in the region last October. Meanwhile, the Tanzanian government has leased a DC-8 cargo plane from Belgium to ferry anti-cholera medicines to the northern Lake Victoria region, where the disease is on the increase, AFP said. As of Tuesday, two trips had been made, carrying a total of 80 tones of medical aid for Mwanza and the surrounding areas of Shinyanga and Tabora. The regions are facing acute shortages of drugs after the collapse of rail and road transportation in the wake of heavy rains and flooding since October.

Meanwhile, the EU said on Tuesday that its temporary ban on fish exports from Tanzania did not include frozen or processed fish products. The EU head of delegation in Tanzania, Peter Beck, said the ban imposed recently over concern at continued cholera outbreaks in east Africa, applied to all fresh fish coming from Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda. He added that EU countries have also taken "precautionary measures" over fresh fruit and vegetables imports which include sample testing at airports of entry.

SUDAN: New vice president named

Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammed Taha was named Sudan's first vice president on Tuesday, replacing General Al Zubair Mohammed Saleh, killed in a plane crash last week, the official SUNA news agency said. Minister of state for foreign affairs Mustafa Osman Ismail was named to replace Taha as foreign minister.

Nairobi, 18 February 1998 15:30 GMT

[ENDS]

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Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Update 360 for 21-23 Feb 98.2.23

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IRIN Update No. 360 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 21-23 February 1998)

BURUNDI: Sanctions to stay

Regional leaders decided to keep economic sanctions against Burundi at the end of a meeting in Kampala on Saturday. Burundi radio, monitored by the BBC, said however there appeared to be some division among the participants. It also pointed out that for the first time, Burundi had attended a regional summit to discuss the embargo. However, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, quoted by AFP, said there was "complete unanimity" on maintaining sanctions. A summit statement claimed "no significant progress" had been made in the peace process. Museveni had earlier opened the meeting with a call to "banish the ideology of genocide and sectarianism forever". The statement said all-party peace talks should continue under the mediation of former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, whom Burundi's rulers accuse of bias.

Burundi's Foreign Minister Luc Rukingama described the decision as "a very bad step in the wrong direction", according to AFP. President Pierre Buyoya, speaking on his return to Bujumbura, said the decision would not put a stop to the peace process. "I think that the lifting of sanctions will depend on us," he said on Burundi radio. "We are going to endeavour to see to it that in the coming months, no-one will have any pretext to call for sanctions against Burundi or call for their maintenance." The meeting was attended by Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. Nyerere was also present, as was OAU Secretary-General Dr Salim Ahmed Salim.

RWANDA: 11 killed in attack on tea factory

Eleven people were killed following a rebel attack on a tea factory near the northwestern town of Gisenyi last week, the Rwanda News Agency reported. Rebels armed with rifles and traditional weapons attacked the Pfunda tea factory on Thursday afternoon, and ensuing clashes with the army reportedly lasted some 50 minutes.

Dallaire testimony postponed

General Romeo Dallaire, who headed the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) at the time of the 1994 genocide, was due to testify before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha today (Monday), but the hearing was postponed after one of the judges was injured in a riding accident. Dallaire has been called by the defence in the case of Jean-Paul Akayesu, the former mayor of Taba in Gitarama prefecture. BBC radio commented that his appearance will put the spotlight on the UN's activities at the time of the genocide. The hearing is expected to resume tomorrow or Wednesday, to give Judge Lennart Aspegren time to recover.

In addition, two senior French army officers are expected to testify as defence witnesses in the Akayesu case. AFP said they were believed to have been involved in French military operations in Rwanda: one in the early 1990s known as Operation Noroit when France sent troops to help the government of ex-president Juvenal Habyarimana against the then-rebel RPF. The second, Operation Turquoise, was launched towards the end of the genocide in July 1994 to set up a "safe zone" in southwest Rwanda.

Convicted war criminal called by Rutaganda defence

The lawyer defending Georges Rutaganda, a high-ranking official in the Interahamwe militia, has called for convicted war criminal Froduald Karamira to appear before the ICTR. According to the organisation Fondation Hirondelle, which is covering ICTR proceedings, the lawyer Tifaine Dickson, said Karamira would be a "key witness" in the trial. He could testify that the Interahamwe "had received orders from outside", she alleged. Karamira - a deputy leader of the Mouvement Democratique Republicain (MDR) and a member of the extremist "Hutu-Power" faction - was sentenced to death over a year ago in Kigali for his role in the genocide. Of Tutsi origin, he was particularly noted for encouraging the massacre of Tutsis and Hutu opponents over the extremist Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM).

UNDP boss arrives

The administrator of UNDP, James Gustave Speth, arrived in Kigali on Saturday night in preparation for a possible visit to the Great Lakes region by Secretary-General Kofi Annan. In an interview with Rwandan radio yesterday (Sunday), Speth said the purpose of his mission was to listen to senior government officials on ways of improving UN performance in the region.

Dire food situation in Gikongoro

A report in the Rwandan 'New Times' weekly said the food situation in Gikongoro prefecture was again under threat due to recent severe storms that swept through several communes. Particularly affected are the Gasaka, Gikongoro and Remera communes where crops and homes have been flattened by the storms. Local sources told IRIN people are starving in Gikongoro due to the general infertility of the soil.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: NGOs asked to re-register

A cabinet meeting on Friday discussed the role of NGOs in DRC and noted that "most of them indulge in activities other than what they profess to do", DRC television reported. "Some NGOs indulged in furnishing arms to small groups that try to destabilise the eastern part of our country," a report from the meeting said. The report said the NGOs had no contract with the country. However, "in recognition of the importance of these international NGOs", the cabinet decided to ask them to re-register with the interior, foreign and justice ministries. The television added that a legal framework would be drawn up to outline relations between the authorities and NGOs.

Ogata discusses refugee problems

Meanwhile UNHCR chief, Sadako Ogata, held talks in Kinshasa on Friday with Minister of State for the Interior Gaetan Kakudji. According to DRC television, Kakudji said he hoped the problems between UNHCR and his country could be resolved. Ogata also met Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha who said UNHCR had promised to improve living conditions in relevant countries, rather than encourage the setting up of refugee camps. According to a Reuters report, Ogata wrapped up her trip to DRC on Sunday apparently without receiving firm guarantees her agency would have full access to Rwandan refugees in the country. Radio France Internationale said she asked permission from the Kinshasa authorities to reopen the UNHCR office in Goma.

Tshisekedi health said waning

The opposition Union pour la democratie et le progres social (UDPS) claims the health of its leader, Etienne Tshisekedi, has seriously deteriorated. Tshisekedi was moved to his home village of Kabeya Kamwanga in Kasai province last week on the orders of President Laurent-Desire Kabila. According to a UDPS statement issued in Brussels, reported by AFP, Tshisekedi was being deprived of healthcare.

UGANDA: Ugandan schools reopen after sanitary facilities improved

Many of the 800 Ugandan schools ordered closed earlier this month to stem an outbreak of cholera reopened today, health officials said, quoted by AFP. The government had ordered the closure of schools without adequate toilets after the disease broke out following torrential rains and floods. Any school unable to provide adequate sanitary facilities was being assisted by the government. Most of the affected schools are in the Kampala and Mbale areas, AFP said.

ADF rebels launch attacks in west

Rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) kidnapped 30 schoolgirls after attacking a school in the western Kabarole district on Thursday. The state-owned 'New Vision' newspaper later said the girls managed to escape their abducters. Two students and two rebels were reported killed in fighting that ensued after government troops arrived on the scene. In an incident over the weekend, ADF insurgents killed six people in Kyabandara village, Bundibugyo district, press reports said.

Nairobi, 23 February 1998, 14:15 gmt

[ENDS]

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U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 362 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 25 February 1998)

SUDAN: Relief flights resume to four sites in Bahr el Ghazal

Relief flights to supply 60,000 people with urgently needed assistance in four locations in southern Sudan's troubled Bahr el Ghazal state will resume on Thursday, a spokeswoman for Operation Lifeline Sudan told IRIN today (Wednesday). However, a further 40,000 vulnerable people in 40 locations in the region are still affected by a government flight ban imposed on 4 February. The displaced in the four sites of Akuem, Ajiep, Adet and Pakor that will be reached by the two food flights planned for tomorrow, have not received any assistance since they fled fighting between government soldiers and rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) earlier this month.

WFP delivers food by road

WFP announced today that it has succeeded in delivering food by road to northern Bahr El Ghazal, marking the first time that the UN has managed to send food so far north by road from Uganda. The first 120 MT of sorghum from a WFP convoy of 400 MT arrived in Mapel area on Sunday, enduring 900 kilometres of extremely rough and broken roads during a three-week journey.
This 120 MT of food will sustain 51,000 people for six days. "Unfortunately the situation is still serious because only one-quarter of the population in northern Bahr El Ghazal can be reached by road," said David Fletcher, Head of WFP's Southern Sudan operation and Deputy Coordinator for OLS. He added that air operations will still be necessary to deliver food to many inaccessible areas, especially during the rainy season.

UN Secretary-General sends message to Beshir

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's envoy for humanitarian affairs in Sudan met Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir yesterday (Tuesday) and delivered a message from Annan, the official news agency SUNA reported. The news agency did not divulge the contents of the message. According to SUNA, Beshir said Sudan will continue to cooperate with UN-sponsored relief efforts.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Rising tension in Uvira

Humanitarian sources speak of rising tension in Uvira with reports of Banyamulenge soldiers deserting the DRC army and fleeing into Rwanda. The escarpment road between Uvira and Bukavu is closed and groups of soldiers are said to be in Kamanyola along the road, on the border with Rwanda and Burundi. Meanwhile at Bukavu airport, two people were killed in a skirmish between rival soldiers although the situation in the town is calm.

Malaria epidemic feared in Kinshasa

A Congolese TV report warned on Sunday that Kinshasa was facing a potential malaria epidemic. According to the broadcast, nearly half of all hospital beds in the city are filled by malaria patients. Six to eight percent of the mortality rate is attributed to the disease, with the figure hitting 30 percent in some areas. The problem has been compounded by poor sanitary conditions and increasing resistance to anti-malaria drugs.

BURUNDI: Military court frees Bagaza

A Burundian military court today announced the release of former president Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, saying it did not have the authority to judge him and others accused of plotting to overthrow the government of Pierre Buyoya, AFP reported. The war council, a military court established by Buyoya, opened the so-called "Bagaza file" last Friday, but the council's competence was immediately challenged by the defence. Bagaza refused to appear at the initial hearing because, according to an AFP source close to him, "as a former head of state, it is his right to be tried only by the supreme court." Eight other people, including soldiers and a senior magistrate, were accused of plotting with Bagaza to overthrow Buyoya.

UNDP boss calls for increased aid

UNDP Administrator James Gustave Speth ended a two-day tour of Burundi today urging the international community to step up aid to the country, Reuters reported. "We will do everything that we can do in the United Nations... But in the end, it will take a larger international community - beyond the UN itself - if we are going to be able to find the resources that Burundi needs," he said. Speth noted the humanitarian situation in Burundi was already severe but had been compounded by poverty, civil war, bad weather and regional economic sanctions. "This is a cumulative consequence of great severity for Burundi and one of the messages that I want to give the international community is that it's time to be helpful to people in crisis," he added.

Buyoya rejects self-defence militias

Meanwhile, Buyoya has rejected civilian self-defence militias as an answer to Burundi's security problems. In a speech on Monday broadcast by state radio, he said "we do not intend to form militias. On the contrary it's what we want to avoid, and all precautions have been taken." According to an AFP despatch, villagers are instead to be taught surveillance techniques, establishing three layers of defence: the security efforts of citizens, security forces and the administration. "We have no intention to distribute arms to the people," Buyoya said.

ANGOLA: Government says country risks war

The Angolan government warned yesterday the country risked sliding back into civil war following an escalation of armed incidents in recent weeks. In a statement to the press, General Higino Carneiro, the deputy minister in charge of implementing the 1994 peace accords, challenged UNITA to make a "declaration of total demilitarization" before 28 February, the date previously agreed by both sides. Carneiro said UNITA still has a significant number of soldiers - at least 5,000 - who are prepared to resume hostilities. "If the situation continues, the government will take reprisals, if necessary," he warned.

Defence minister accuses UNITA of retraining

Angolan Defence Minister General Pedro Sebastiao has accused UNITA of reorganising its forces with an "important" contingent undergoing

training in DRC. Speaking in Maputo yesterday while on an official visit, Sebastiao told Mozambican state radio that UNITA's demoblisation deadline "will be just another date of no consequence." Sebatiao was in Maputo to discuss national security issues with his Mozambican counterpart the broadcast, monitored by the BBC, said.

UGANDA: LRA attacks Kitgum

Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels attacked the northern town of Kitgum earlier today, humanitarian sources told IRIN. Shops were looted and people abducted in the five-hour raid by some 150 rebels which began at around 1:00 am. According to initial reports, there were no deaths. Humanitarian sources suggested the attack was a diversion to draw government forces into town while the main group of rebels crossed back to Sudan with many abductees.

Rebels behead 11 people

Ugandan rebels beheaded five people after ambushing them in the western district of Bundibugyo, bringing the number of victims of such attacks in the area this week to 11. AFP reported the state-owned 'New Vision' newspaper as saying today that Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) insurgents beheaded three brothers and a married couple after forcing their car to stop along the Fort Portal-Bundibugyo road on Tuesday. The same group killed six people when they raided a village in the district on Sunday. The rebels have stepped up their attacks in Bundibugyo since the Ugandan army and DRC troops in an operation against them.

Malaria drugs in short supply

Stocks of anti-malaria drugs are in short supply in parts of Uganda, the 'New Vision' reported yesterday. The worst hit regions are the east and west of the country, Communicable Disease Control Commissioner, Dr Sam Okware, said. Teams carrying supplies from Kampala have been sent to the affected districts, he added. Meanwhile, the director of Uganda's blood transfusion services said El-Nino induced epidemics had trebled the demand for blood.

RWANDA: Dallaire begins testimony in Arusha

The former head of UN peacekeeping forces in Rwanda, the Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, began his testimony before the UN war crimes tribunal for Rwanda today. He was called by the defence to give evidence in the case against a former mayor, Jean-Paul Akayesu. Akayesu is charged with genocide and crimes against humanity.

Court upholds death verdict

A Rwandan appeals court on Monday upheld the death penalty against former Kigali prosecutor, Silas Munyagishari, convicted of genocide and other crimes against humanity, the Rwanda News Agency reported.

Nairobi, 25 February 1998, 14:15 GMT

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IRIN Update No. 364 for Central and Eastern Africa (Friday 27 February 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Army chief in Bukavu

Amid reports of continuing tension in the Bukavu/Uvira area, acting DRC army chief Commander James Kabare arrived in Bukavu yesterday (Thursday). Reports said he was due to arrive in the border town of Kamanyola today (Friday) to lead negotiations with various military units. Humanitarian sources reported that the Uvira border with Bujumbura was partially closed. The road to Bukavu is already closed, as is the border with Rwanda.

Flooding still affecting villages in Kisangani area

CRS in Kisangani says that despite the fact flood waters are receding, some villages in the area are still completely inundated. Severe flooding last December left many people homeless and provoked an outbreak of cholera. Still badly affected are villages along the axis west of Isangi to Lokutu and beyond, provoking concern as the rains of late March-April mark the river's traditional flooding period.

RWANDA: ICTR trying to find perpetrators of Kabgayi rape

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) is trying to establish responsibility for the brutal rape of numerous women and young girls at a camp near Runda, outside the capital Kigali in 1994, AFP reported. Six investigators from the court have been travelling round the area, attempting to interview witnesses to the rapes at Kabgayi camp. However a court magistrate told AFP the issue of security "is causing witnesses to clam up and they are increasingly hesitant about speaking out".

Life imprisonment for genocide suspect

A court in Butare has sentenced a defendant to life imprisonment on genocide charges, the Rwanda News Agency reported. Tharcisse Karuranga, a former driver and mechanic, denied the charges saying he was sick at the time of the massacres in his home commune of Mbazi.

Gasana criticises human rights organisations

Rwandan Foreign Minister Anastase Gasana has criticised some international human rights organisations for "always giving false information about the human rights situation in the country without considering the effects of the 1994 genocide", Rwandan radio reported today. During a meeting with a visiting Amnesty International official, Roger Clark, the minister said organisations such as AI should instead help the government "inculcate the culture of respect for human rights into its citizens".

BURUNDI: Bagaza accuses authorities of violating his rights

Ex-president Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, who was recently released by a military court after being accused of plotting to overthrow President Pierre Buyoya, has charged that the authorities violated his rights. "The Buyoya government locked me up without any valid document, I was not brought before any magistrate and I was not allowed to receive members of my family or lawyers," he said, according to AFP. He claimed his house was still under army surveillance.

UGANDA: 17 LRA rebels killed in "fierce fighting" in Kitgum

Seventeen rebels from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), including a top commander, were killed by security forces during "fierce clashes" in the northern Kitgum area over the weekend. According to the state-owned 'New Vision' daily, there were no army or civilian casualties in the battle "said to be one of the bloodiest in Kitgum this year".

SUDAN: 80 government soldiers killed, rebels say

Sudanese rebels said yesterday (Thursday) they killed 80 government soldiers and took 14 captive in an attack in eastern Sudan, Reuters news agency reported. In a statement, the opposition National Democratic Alliance, said its forces staged a "sweeping and devastating ambush", about 76 km southeast of Kassala. A large cache of weapons was also seized, according to the statement.

ANGOLA: UNITA rules out demilitarisation by end-February deadline

The former rebel UNITA movement has ruled out total demilitarisation by the end-February deadline. In a statement, broadcast by UNITA radio today, the movement's standing committee said the remaining troops could not be demobilised "effectively or with dignity". "The demobilisation exercise is the sole responsibility of the MPLA government and the international community," the statement added. It claimed the government "has neither started nor does it intend to disarm civilians in cities, notably Luanda. This is a fundamental task to prevent the massacre of thousands of innocent people as happened in October-November 1992."

Nairobi, 27 February 1998, 14:00 gmt

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IRIN Update No. 366 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 3 March 1998)

ANGOLA: Dos Santos warns of war over UNITA's deadline failure

Following UNITA's failure to meet Saturday's deadline to demobilise, Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos has written to US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright warning of a potential war situation, Angolan TV reported yesterday (Monday). Dos Santos called for international pressure on UNITA to change its attitude.

Luanda last week threatened "dire consequences" if UNITA did not fulfil all the requirements of the 1994 peace agreement by Saturday. The government and the UN have accused UNITA of dragging its heels over demobilising its army and returning all territory to government administration. According to Reuters, more than 3,000 UNITA troops have yet to be demobilised and the government and the UN have said the demobilisation process is closed as far as they are concerned.

According to the London-based Angolan Peace Monitor, "it is clear that UNITA maintains a large, heavily armed military force." Its latest report quotes military analysts in Angola as putting the figure of UNITA troops at large as between 15,000 and 25,000. The Angola Peace Monitor also says no substantial amounts of heavy weaponry have been handed over to the UN by UNITA. The International Institute for Strategic Studies in its 1996/97 'Military Balance' report lists UNITA equipment as including tanks, large calibre field guns, and anti-aircraft missiles.

Angola observers launch diplomatic shuttle

Representatives of the United States, Russia and Portugal are involved in a round of shuttle diplomacy aimed at pushing forward the country's stalled peace process, Reuters reported. The news agency quoted diplomats as saying the representatives hoped to persuade UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi to issue a declaration of demilitarisation and to agree to an accelerated timetable for the extension of state control throughout the whole of Angola.

SADC calls for firmer implementation of sanctions on UNITA

The 14-nation Southern African Development Community (SADC) on Monday expressed concern over the faltering peace process in Angola and called for stricter implementation of sanctions against UNITA, Reuters reported. "The situation in Angola is bad and requires the enforcement of agreed sanctions against UNITA," said Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano at the end of a one-day SADC summit in Maputo.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: At least 300 killed in Butembo: AZADHO

According to the DRC human rights group AZADHO, at least 300 people, including civilians, have been killed in clashes between the DRC army and Mayi-Mayi rebels in Butembo last week. The rights group said the killings followed the army's recapture of the town from the rebels who had launched an attack on 20 February. Young men in particular were allegedly targeted by the army as Mayi-Mayi supporters.

16 executed in Lubumbashi

Sixteen people were executed by firing squad in Lubumbashi today (Tuesday) for murder and armed robbery, AFP reported. They included two soldiers and 14 civilians. The public execution, the third this year in DRC, took place at the Wangu military camp.

RWANDA: MSF wants parliamentary probe into France's role in Rwanda

MSF on Monday called for a parliamentary commission to investigate France's role in Rwanda between 1990 and 1994, news agencies reported. MSF has accused the French authorities of "having supported the regime of President Habyarimana while he made racism the pillar of his policy, going as far as planning and carry out the genocide of the Rwandan Tutsis and the massacre of opposition leaders".

GREAT LAKES: UN launches US $550 million consolidated appeal

The UN on Friday launched a US $550 million Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for countries of the Great Lakes Region and Central Africa to meet the emergency needs of over five million people in 1998. The Appeal covers Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. A press release by OCHA said the the humanitarian programme for Congo-Brazzaville is currently under preparation, and will be issued as an addendum this month.

OCHA described the humanitarian situation in the region as grave. Cross-border and internal tensions are on the increase, leaving hundreds of thousands vulnerable to attack. Over two million people are displaced throughout the region. In addition, the statement said, the food deficit has increased, social services have been disrupted and the economies have become severely debilitated. These afflictions have been further compounded by the effects of recent drought and flooding. The Appeal reflects the "complex mosaic of requirements in the region." It aims at providing the basic life-saving assistance still needed while also assisting countries in rebuilding their national infrastructures.

Nairobi, 3 March 1998 13:45 GMT

[ENDS]

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U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 370 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 7-9 March 1998)

RWANDA: Over 5,000 genocide suspects to stand trial this year

Supreme Court Prosecutor Simeon Rwagasore has announced that over 5,000 genocide suspects will be tried this year, compared to 300 last year, the Rwanda News Agency reported. The move is aimed at resolving the problem of Rwanda's overcrowded prisons. Rwagasore urged the government to help the judiciary in its work. He was speaking after a meeting last week between public prosecutors and Prime Minister Pierre Celestin Rwigema. The premier said one of the government's major concerns was that the genocide trials be speeded up.

Gitarama reported calm after rebel infiltration

Fighting in central Gitarama prefecture was reported under control, after rebels infiltrated the area last week. Deputy Commander of the Gitarama-Kibuye brigade, Colonel Karenzi Karake told RNA on Saturday life had now returned to normal, although mopping-up operations were still continuing in some communes to crush the remaining Interahamwe militiamen scattered in forests, swamps and hills of the Ndiza region. The rebels had been cut off from returning to their hideouts in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri prefectures. Some of the 80 prisoners, freed by the rebels in Nyakabanda commune, had started to return, RNA reported.

Genocide suspect rearrested in US

A Hutu cleric and genocide suspect has been rearrested in the US, after an American court set him free last year saying his detention was unconstitutional, the 'EastAfrican' weekly reported today. The Reverend Elizaphan Ntakirutimana has been called to stand trial by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). A State Department official, explaining the re-arrest, said: "We believe that the law and the facts support surrender for trial."

BURUNDI: Airline boss arrested for bribe-taking

The director-general of the national airline, Air Burundi, has been arrested for taking bribes, Burundi radio reported on Friday. It quoted Transport Minister Venerand Nzohabonayo as saying the case was now in the hands of the judiciary. The minister added that Air Burundi was currently undergoing financial problems due to its internal management and the regional embargo. Meanwhile, French President Jacques Chirac is reported to have called for lifting the sanctions on Burundi. President Pierre Buyoya, speaking after meeting Chirac in Paris, said the French leader "deplored" the embargo and called for a review, AFP reported.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: UN team complains of witness harassment

The UN human rights investigation team in DRC has complained that two witnesses it interviewed in the northwest Mbandaka region have been arrested, Radio France Internationale reported. The mission also said its members were being tailed by the authorities. However spokesman Jose Diaz told IRIN today (Monday) the team's activities were continuing in Mbandaka. He added that the security situation in eastern DRC did not permit investigations there at the moment. Team members had left for Angola where they will interview Rwandan refugees, he said. Refugees in the Central African Republic and Congo-Brazzaville had already been interviewed.

Mayi-Mayi rebels said targeting Katangese soldiers

More details have come to light about the alleged killing of 300 people by DRC soldiers in Butembo last month. The allegations were made by the DRC human rights group AZADHO, who said the army was retaliating against the temporary occupation of the town by rebel Mayi-Mayi fighters. AZADHO deputy chairman Pascal Kabale told Radio France Internationale on Friday the fact the Mayi-Mayi were now attacking Katangese soldiers, who make up most of the army in the Butembo area, was a new development as they had previously targeted Tutsis whom they regard as "foreigners". According to Kabale, the Mayi-Mayi had accused the DRC soldiers of "molesting the people". This included "torture, degrading acts and even summary executions", he said. Local sources told IRIN today civilian victims had been buried in mass graves by the military. Butembo is under curfew and very tense as the Mayi-Mayi have reportedly threatened to attack again.

'Le Soft International' seized at airport

Copies of the international edition of the independent newspaper 'Le Soft' were seized at Kinshasa airport last week, reportedly because the paper was carrying an article on fresh unrest in eastern DRC. According to AFP, 'Le Soft International', which is distributed in Europe, has been seized four times in the past eight months. It is run by Kin-Kiey Mulumba who was information minister under ousted president Mobutu Sese Seko.

Kabila discusses "minor border frictions" in Bangui

President Laurent-Desire Kabila has had talks in Bangui with his CAR counterpart Ange-Felix Patasse to discuss "minor frictions" on the border between the two countries, DRC radio in Bunia reported. Kabila stopped off in Bangui on Thursday on his return from a summit meeting in Mozambique.

Kabila meets EU envoy

On Saturday, Kabila met the EU special envoy for the Great Lakes region Aldo Ajello in Kinshasa, according to DRC television. They discussed the EU's contribution to DRC's process of democratisation. Ajello announced that the EU had appointed a unit to handle the process and approved a financial package to help it along.

NGO says food shortages could be avoided

An NGO operating in northern DRC has pointed out that the region of Dungu-Doruma on the border with Sudan is agriculturally under-developed because of the appalling infrastructure. Terre sans Frontieres said the region had agricultural potential which could easily be developed. If the roads were maintained, the region could produce enough to relieve food shortages in Sudan and contribute towards the development of northern DRC and

southern Sudan.

SUDAN: Bashir reshuffles cabinet

President Omar al-Bashir has reshuffled his cabinet and created a new ministry for international cooperation and investment. According to Sudanese television, the reshuffle includes new defence, interior and justice ministers. AFP noted the reshuffle brings in ex-SPLA rebel Lam Akol as transport minister and includes two northern opponents.

UGANDA: Museveni says western aid encourages dependency

President Yoweri Museveni, addressing a meeting of international investors in Addis Ababa yesterday (Sunday), accused the West of encouraging dependency in Africa by continuing to provide aid to "dead economies", Reuters reported. "Aid causes dependency and dependency is slavery," he said. Despite three decades of western aid, there was no country in Africa where citizens led very comfortable lives. "That is proof that the aid policy is wrong for Africa," Museveni said. He criticised the IMF and World Bank for seeking to force the implementation of structural reforms in Africa without trying to understand different African economies, Reuters said. He called instead for politically educating Africans "to understand abuse by their governments".

Political parties demand freedom to operate

Political parties in Uganda are demanding the freedom to conduct their activities ahead of a visit by US President Bill Clinton, according to Gabonese radio. Its correspondent in the region noted that the Ugandan constitution approves the existence of parties but bans their activities. Political parties are organising a conference two weeks before Clinton's visit this month "to remind the US president that multiparty politics in Uganda is not dead," the radio said.

Rebels kill 29

Rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) used axes and pangas to hack 29 people to death in the northern Gulu district, the state-owned 'New Vision' reported on Saturday. The killings occurred in various parts of the district over the last week, it said.

Police allegedly abducting refugees

The Ugandan human rights commission said on Friday it was investigating allegations that police were abducting Rwandan and DRC refugees. AFP quoted a member of the commission as saying the motive of the abductions had not yet been established. The chief of external security organisation Philip Idri denied the police were behind the abductions of four named people. "People accuse us of this because they think we support Rwanda, but our first concern is law and order," he said.

Charter flights to remote northern regions

United Airlines of Uganda has launched special charter flights to Adjumani, Arua, Moyo and Pakuba in the north of the country. Ugandan radio said the flights would operate daily from Entebbe airport. Tourism Minister Brigadier Moses Ali said the move would help people in the West Nile region who suffered from severe transport problems.

ANGOLA: UNITA announces complete demobilisation

The former rebel UNITA movement has announced a complete demobilisation of its forces by the middle of this month. A statement broadcast by UNITA radio on Friday, said a "special and final demobilisation operation" would take place in some 15 locations between 11-15 March and UNITA generals would be demobilised in Bailundo between 16-19 March. UNITA leaders would enter Luanda on 31 March following the demobilisation, the final deadline for implementation of the 1994 Lusaka peace accord.

KENYA: New tax measures condemned

Kenyan press reports said new tax measures introduced by the government last week have been greeted with "almost unanimous condemnation". The 'Daily Nation' said businessmen, politicians and ordinary citizens alike described the tax increases on fuel and VAT as "harsh, punitive and brutal". The newspaper said the prices of most commodities would rise as a result of the tax changes, introduced to offset a rising budget deficit.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Weapons still prevail in Brazzaville

UNICEF says despite the government's efforts to disarm militiamen and others holding illegal weapons, the prevalence of arms in Brazzaville and elsewhere in the country is still widespread. Young members of the Cobras, Ninjas and other militias are refusing to hand in their weapons, particularly as many of them have not been integrated into the national army. Minister of Labour and Social Security Jean-Martin Mbemba was wounded when armed bandits broke into his house just north of Brazzaville. His driver and a bodyguard were shot and killed.

Nairobi, 9 March 1998, 14:15 gmt

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IRIN Update No. 371 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 10 March 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Army crackdown on rebel "accomplices"

Local sources in Goma told IRIN today (Tuesday) many people had been arrested in the past week during an army crackdown on alleged Mayi-Mayi and Interahamwe "accomplices". In a press conference yesterday (Monday), the North Kivu Governor, Leonard Gafunde, called on the local population not to collaborate with rebels. "If you want peace, you must disassociate from peace enemies," he warned.

51 people killed in Butembo clashes - governor

Gafunde said that 51 people died following last month's Mayi-Mayi attack on Butembo. In response to a question on army reprisals in the town, he said that "all troublemakers must be suppressed. If the population is cooperating with the enemy, they have to be treated accordingly." Independent sources claim that more than 300 people were killed following the army's recapture of Butembo. Meanwhile, clashes between the army and rebels have reportedly occurred on the Goma/Rutshuru road and in Mushaki, 30 km west of Goma.

Banyamulenge end mutiny

Several hundred Banyamulenge soldiers have ended a two-week mutiny in eastern DRC after being granted amnesty, Reuters reported local officials as saying on Monday. The soldiers returned to Bukavu at the weekend. But not all the grievances they outlined during a week of "tense" negotiations had been immediately addressed, a senior official said.

The mutiny and clashes with other factions of the army were sparked by attempts to integrate the Banyamulenge with ex-FAZ and to send them out of their region of origin. The deserting Banyamulenge also said they feel inadequately compensated in the current military hierarchy for the key role they played in the war. The officials said there were no new plans to move the Banyamulenge out of their region of origin where anti-Tutsi sentiment threatens their families.

AFP reported that the South Kivu authorities are down playing tensions between Banyamulenge and other ethnic groups. At the weekend, Governor Charles Magabe denounced a "psychosis fed by unfounded reports". He described as an "exaggeration" reports of ethnic tensions.

Kabila meets dos Santos

DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila yesterday met his Angolan counterpart in Luanda to discuss Angola's domestic political situation and border security concerns. No statement was issued after the two-hour meeting, according to Angolan TV, monitored by the BBC.

300 intelligence officers graduate

More than 300 young graduates of the Academy of the National Intelligence Agency were sworn in as security officers at the weekend, state TV reported. Chairing the ceremony, Kabila called on the graduates "to rebuild a country that has once again been ravaged."

BURUNDI: Vatican reiterates opposition to sanctions

The Vatican on Monday confirmed its opposition to sanctions against Burundi following talks between Pope John Paul II and Burundi President Pierre Buyoya. A Vatican spokesman said the church "will continue to speak out in favour of lifting sanctions which hit the most deprived parts of the population the hardest." Buyoya is on a tour seeking to raise the pressure in Europe for an end to the regionally-imposed embargo, AFP reported. He is expected to meet Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: Patasse claims mercenary coup plot

Mercenaries are being recruited in Belgium and France to overthrow Central African Republic leader Ange-Felix Patasse, he said in an interview published today. He told the French daily 'Liberation' that French elements "nostalgic about the past who want to hang on to their colonial bastion" were planning "low blows" against him, AFP reported. But he said he wanted to work with "official and democratic" France. Patasse also said he was upset about the French military withdrawal from Bangui, calling it a "fait accompli."

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: WFP says food situation precarious

WFP describes the food situation in Congo-Brazzaville as "precarious", particularly for the former refugees presently accommodated in transit sites. The resumption of agricultural activities is being hampered by lack of seeds, as the existing stocks were consumed during wartime, the agency added. An estimated seven percent of the children are malnourished and WFP will pay special attention to the needs of these groups. Cholera cases continue to be reported, with over 1,000 cases registered at Pointe Noire and in the Kouilou region. A mission from the local health authorities also reported many cases of typhoid fever in the hinterland.

UNICEF project for war-traumatised children underway

A UNICEF project to identify and assist war-traumatised children has begun in Brazzaville. In the Bacongo area, UNICEF teams have mounted house-by-house screening of children, with some 900 children between the ages of 3-17 years seen up to 21 February. A high proportion of the children exhibited signs of trauma, including aggressiveness, muteness and psychosomatic paralysis. Similar house-by-house screening exercises will be organised throughout the city.

In a related project, UNICEF is collaborating with UNFPA, IFRC, the International Rescue Committee, and other organisations to provide support to victims of sexual violence in the Congo.

UGANDA: Reduced crop yields expected due to flooding

The Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) February report for Uganda indicates abnormally-high rainfalls will reduce yields for cereals and pulses in the second harvest season underway in western, central and eastern regions. Low yields are also expected for cash crops such as cotton and coffee, with cotton production for 1997/98 expected to be 40 percent down. Prices for staple food crops remain historically high, reflecting low supply and reduced access. Meteorological authorities in Uganda have warned that anomalous rainfall patterns are expected to continue through 1998, the report says.

RWANDA: Akayesu hearings to end in March

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda will complete hearings on genocide defendant Jean-Paul Akayesu by the end of the month. The prosecution's case against Akayesu, a former mayor, will start winding up on 19 March while defence counsel will have their final say from 25 March, according to Fondation Hirondelle. Meanwhile, a defence lawyer said that the trial of another key defendant, former colonel Theoneste Bagosora, will not open as planned on Thursday, AFP reported. Procedural delays were cited as the reason.

Presbyterian minister released

The Rwandan authorities have released a Presbyterian minister and five companions who were detained on 14 February as suspected rebel sympathisers, church authorities said on Monday. The six, travelling to Kigali from western Kibuye region, were held at a gendarme post after picking up a hitch-hiker who was wanted in connection with alleged rebel activity in Kibuye, AFP reported.

TANZANIA: Rift Valley Fever and "malaria" outbreaks reported

Tanzanian medical and veterinary teams are struggling to control an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever and another disease they class as "malaria" that is ravaging the northern region of Arusha, the state-owned 'Daily News' reported today.

Nairobi, 10 March 1998, 15:00 GMT

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IRIN Update No. 372 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 11 March 1998)

US-AFRICA: Museveni organises regional summit for Clinton

Uganda plans to host 10 regional leaders at a meeting with US President Bill Clinton in Kampala later this month. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said yesterday (Tuesday) that Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Eritrean President Isayas Afewerki have confirmed their participation. He did not name the other heads of state who will attend. According to Kenya's 'Daily Nation', the presidents of Kenya and Tanzania have been invited. Regional security and African-US relations are on the summit's agenda.

Clinton plans Kigali stopover

Clinton will stop briefly in Kigali during his African tour, but security concerns will restrict him to the airport, AFP reported the 'Washington Post' as saying today (Wednesday). The 25 March stopover will include a public event to "address and acknowledge the genocide and the humanitarian crisis that ensued," a senior official said.

ANGOLA: Luanda legalises UNITA as part of peace process

The Angolan government today legalised the former rebel UNITA movement and gave it full party political status as part of moves to advance a stalled peace process. An official statement announced the government had lifted "all obstacles" banning UNITA activities and said the movement "may exercise its activities across the whole of the territory".

Reuters quoted government officials saying the move followed UNITA's formal declaration on Friday of military demobilisation - a key requirement for officially ending Africa's longest running civil war. The UNITA action allowed the adoption of a new timescale for implementation of the Lusaka accords which must now be completed by 1 April. UNITA welcomed today's government move but said it was more of a symbolic gesture because UNITA, which has 70 members of parliament in Luanda, has been registered as a political party since 1992.

Both sides remain deeply suspicious of each other and continue to trade accusations of peace accord violations. On Tuesday, Angolan state television said UNITA had attacked army positions in Huila while UNITA's 'Black Cockerel' radio said government forces were poised to attack their Jamba stronghold from Namibia.

KENYA: Politicians interrogated over Rift Valley violence

A number of Kenyan politicians have been interrogated in connection with the ethnic clashes that rocked parts of Rift Valley Province at the beginning of the year. Police Commissioner Duncan Wachira said yesterday those questioned had made "provocative" statements that could have fuelled the violence in Nakuru and Laikipia districts in which at least 127 people died, local media reported. Wachira did not name the politicians that had been questioned, but said the findings of a two-week long police probe would be forwarded to the attorney-general.

Kibaki denies DP involvement

The Democratic Party has denied allegations made by President Daniel arap Moi on Monday that it was involved in the January-February clashes. DP Chairman Mwai Kibaki challenged the government to take to court any DP leader implicated in the violence. CID boss Noah arap Too has meanwhile refuted allegations that the security forces were slow to react to the killings.

Maize duty waiver announced

The government has announced a duty waiver on maize imports to cover an estimated 7-9 million bag shortfall in local production. The 25 percent duty waiver will be effective from 1 April to June 30, but subject to review, local media reported today. Kenya consumes 30-32 million bags annually, but domestic production is forecast at 23 million bags during the 1998 harvesting period due to the impact of El Nino.

RWANDA: Bagasora trial postponed

The trial of colonel Theoneste Bagasora will not open on 12 March as initially scheduled, the ICTR has confirmed. Quoting an anonymous source, Fondation Hirondelle said the hearings of the prosecution witnesses might not start before "next summer". Bagasora, accused of genocide and crimes against humanity, is the highest-ranking officer of the former Rwandan army to face trial in Arusha.

32 bandits arrested

Police in the southern Rwandan Butare Prefecture have arrested 32 bandits who had been looting communes in the area, the Rwandan News Agency reported yesterday. Officials in Butare said among those arrested were several ex-FAR.

TANZANIA: Health minister tours disease outbreak region

The outbreak of a mysterious disease, which reportedly claims 20 to 30 lives a day in northwestern Tanzania, has prompted a visit by Health Minister Aaron Chiduo, a local paper said today. Chiduo and a four-man team of experts are collecting blood samples from affected people for laboratory tests, the English-language daily 'The African' reported. On Sunday, Muleba area MP Wilson Masilingi told a meeting of his constituents living in Dar es Salaam that the unknown disease had killed 665 people in seven months, and that it was continuing to claim between 20 and 30 lives daily, AFP said.

BURUNDI: Nutritional survey confirms high child malnutrition rates

A nutritional survey by the British NGO Children's Aid Direct (CAD) in Bubanza province has recorded an overall malnutrition rate of 17.2 percent among children aged 6-59 months. Severe malnutrition was 4.5 percent. The results of the survey, conducted among 900 children last month, compares with the 19.5 percent and 9.2 percent respectively from CAD's last baseline survey undertaken in August last year.

According to an OCHA report, the continued high malnutrition rates can be attributed to general poor food security at the household level with an average caloric daily intake of only 988 kcal (as opposed to a normal intake of 1,900 kcal) despite a slight improvement in quantity and variety of diet. The price of an average food basket has increased by 130 percent since the imposition of the 1996 embargo, according to FAO data.

SUDAN: Khartoum wants positive outcome from IGAD talks

Sudan's government said it is committed to a positive outcome from next week's Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace talks. External Relations Minister Mustafa Uthman Isma'il said he hoped other countries participating in the 16 March meeting in Djibouti will work towards peace, state TV reported. He also urged European ambassadors to pressure southern rebels to accept its offer of a ceasefire so humanitarian aid can be delivered unhindered.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Draft constitution debate

DRC's Constitutional Commission on Monday adopted several articles of the draft constitution, l'Agence Congolaise de Presse (ACP) reported. It gave no details of the approved articles. According to humanitarian sources, although the draft has not been made public, some of its provisions are already being discussed by the media in Kinshasa. These include the alleged stipulation that the number of political parties be restricted to three.

UGANDA: Army kills five rebels in ambush

The Ugandan army killed five rebels when they laid an ambush to rescue 42 people abducted by the insurgents in the north earlier this week, local newspapers reported. All the hostages, most of them children abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), were rescued during the encounter near the town of Palabek in Kitgum district on Monday. Lieutenant Colonel Hudson Mukasa told reporters that the rebels were heading toward southern Sudan with the captives when they fell into the ambush, AFP said.

GREAT LAKES: UK pledges at donor meeting

The UK is donating three million pounds (about US $4.9 million) to UN programmes in the Great Lakes. Of the total, 250,000 pounds is earmarked for OCHA's work in the region, while the remainder is for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' operations in Rwanda and Burundi. The announcement was made at a briefing of donor nations in Geneva today, where UN agencies presented the 1998 UN's consolidated appeal for the Great Lakes and Central Africa. The appeal includes Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and a revised US $23 million for Congo-Brazzaville. The total requirements are for US $573 million.

The latest figures have also been released for last year's Great Lakes appeal, which raised about US $280 million for UN programmes in the region. Other humanitarian agencies and programmes received about US $248 million.

This year's appeal includes various rehabilitation and reconstruction proposals, a new approach which today received endorsement from a number of donor nations. Ambassador Berhanu Dinka, the UN's regional humanitarian advisor, told the meeting that humanitarian responses would have to be integrated into rehabilitation and reconstruction needs, given the mixed situation in the region.

GREAT LAKES: Red Cross Movement appeals for US $110 million

The ICRC's annual appeal for Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda, included as an annex to the two-volume UN document (available in hard copy from IRIN) amounts to 143,528,006 Swiss Francs (about US $96 million), while the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies seeks 21,930,000 Swiss Francs (about US $ 14 million) to finance regional programmes benefitting 850,000 people.

Nairobi, 11 March 1998, 14:45 GMT

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U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 378 for Central and Eastern Africa (Thursday 19 March 1998)

UGANDA-UNITED STATES: Museveni says Sudanese "terrorism" on agenda

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said alleged Sudanese "terrorism" will be addressed by US leader Bill Clinton' during his Kampala visit. "I think terrorism is mentioned in the proposed draft joint communique," Museveni said. "So if Sudan has been engaged in terrorism, I think we shall address that problem too." Museveni, in Gulu to boost army efforts to counter a 12-year-insurgency by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), told AFP yesterday (Wednesday) that Sudan was "not a big problem" to regional security. He declared: "They have done all the destabilisation they can do. But we have defeated them, and we shall defeat them even more if they continue with their schemes." He added: "If we work with America, it will be because of our own interests. Our interests may coincide with theirs, but they will not be using us."

Sudan opposition hopes Clinton tour will bolster democracy movements

Clinton's African tour could strengthen the peace and democracy movements in Sudan, a leading opposition member told IPS today (Thursday). The member of the banned Sudanese opposition Democratic Union Party (DUP), who asked not to be named, said that he hoped that Clinton will deliver a strong message for Sudan and other African governments to adopt democratic reforms and improve their human rights records. "We need nothing more from Clinton. He (Clinton) must put pressure on the military leaders in Africa to allow democracy to breathe...," the DUP member said.

Museveni offers swap: school girls for POWs

Museveni said yesterday that Khartoum must arrange the release of 21 schoolgirls abducted by Sudanese-backed rebels before Uganda frees 114 Sudanese prisoners of war. "They (the Sudanese) will stay in prison in Uganda until we get our schoolgirls. We are holding the Sudanese soldiers versus the schoolgirls," Museveni told AFP. Demanding that Sudan must also release two Ugandan soldiers currently being held by the government in Khartoum, Museveni dismissed the significance of a riot by the Sudanese troops last week. "They can riot a thousand times, but they will stay in jail," he declared. "Rioting is not a problem... They will stay there until we get our schoolgirls."

Moi to exchange views with Clinton

Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi will be among the African leaders attending the 25 March summit in Uganda with Clinton, the White House announced on Wednesday. The meeting with Moi will give Clinton "an opportunity to talk to him and ask quite directly about his vision for the future - including constitutional reforms in Kenya," said Joseph Wilson, the US president's adviser on African affairs. "We would like to see that the constitutional reforms and political reforms that have been enunciated by the regime actually take effect," Wilson said. According to AFP, a complete list of leaders expected to attend the summit has not yet been determined. In addition to Moi however, Wilson said US leaders "fully expect" that Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent-Desire Kabila will attend.

Museveni awaits verdict of constitutional court over accused minister

The Ugandan leader said he would await the ruling of a constitutional court before deciding what action to take against a cabinet minister accused by parliament of corruption. Parliament earlier this month passed a motion censuring Primary Education Minister Jim Muhwezi for abuse of office, influence-peddling and graft. The minister has petitioned the constitutional court to seek the reversal of the parliamentary censure. "Muhwezi has gone to a constitutional court. I am still waiting for what happens in that court," Museveni told AFP. Museveni said the parliamentary censure method was new in his administration. "Our movement [ruling party] usually disciplines people through more thoroughgoing fora, where we discuss the issue in detail and not in a formal forum," he said, but added: "I'm going give a chance to all these different groups to play their role - parliament, constitutional court. There are so many new players."

ANGOLA: Hurdles still remain in peace process

UNITA is due to demobilise its last 193 military officers today in their central stronghold at Bailundo, completing the demilitarisation of the movement. On Wednesday the UN representative in Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye, went to the central city of Andulo for talks with UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, who affirmed his commitment to completing implementation of the protocols by 1 April. For its part, the government of Unity and National Reconciliation has begun disarming civilians in Luanda with the aim of assuring security as UNITA sets up headquarters in Luanda. Several other tasks remain to be completed by 1 April, a deadline observers say will be difficult to meet despite widespread optimism that final implementation is in the offing.

Cabinda rebels claim victory

Rebels fighting for independence in Angola's oil-rich Cabinda province say they have captured Mbata-Mbengi, a suburb of the northern town of Neuto, after heavy fighting with government troops. A communique delivered to Reuters in Kinshasa on Wednesday by Emmanuel Nzita, the FLEC/FAC movement's secretary for external relations, said 27 Angolan government soldiers had been killed in the fighting. There was no immediate confirmation from Luanda or independent sources of any fighting in the area. Neuto, 75 km from Cabinda's capital Tchiowa, was taken by Angolan government forces in 1991. FLEC/FAC is one of several rebel movements fighting for the independence of the oil-rich Cabinda enclave.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Government wants EU investigation over accusations

Congo-Brazzaville's government has asked the European Parliament to send an investigative mission to Brazzaville to assess the new regime's democratic progress. According to AFP, the move came in response to a resolution passed last week by the European assembly asking the European Commission to halt humanitarian aid to Congo, which it said had ceased being a "state of due legal process." The resolution will block an EU aid package of 11.5 million ecus (US $12.6 million) for the victims of last year's four-month civil war. The text declared that Congo had become a dictatorship since Denis Sassou Nguesso's return to power last October, AFP said. In a letter addressed Monday to the European Parliament, Congolese Foreign Minister Rodolphe Adada asked for an investigation to verify the allegations. On Tuesday, the transitional parliament said in a statement over government radio that the "democratic process has in no way been put into question" after Sassou Nguesso's military victory.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: US companies say Kabila "positive"

Leaders of a group of US companies with investments in Africa told DRC President Kabila yesterday that they had made a "great start" at doing business in the country. A 40-strong delegation from the Corporate Council for Africa met Kabila for over two hours in the southern city of Lubumbashi, their spokesman, David Miller, told Reuters. "He fielded questions and was very upfront. It was a surprise because he was not the man the US media makes him out to be. He was very engaging and prepared to listen," Miller said. "It was a can-do positive message."

Mobutu generals win stay of extradition

Three former Zairean generals who have been fighting extradition to DRC have been granted the right to stay in South Africa until their application for political refugee status is heard on 21 April, Kenya's 'Daily Nation' said today. The three men - Kpama Baramoto, Ngbane Nzimbi and Mavua Madima - have been living in South Africa since May last year. Media reports claim they are linked to a gun smuggling network in the Great Lakes and a plot to overthrow Kabila's government.

OAU: Delegation to mediate in Comoros

OAU foreign ministers prepared to meet secessionists in the Comoros on Thursday after starting a three-day mission to the Indian Ocean archipelago by calling for a restoration of national unity there. The OAU two months ago condemned the Comoran separatist movement as a threat to peace, and the ministerial delegation hopes to persuade the islands of Anjouan and Moheli to give up their quest for independence. "We have come to reaffirm the OAU commitment to Comoran unity and territorial integrity," Tanzanian Foreign Minister Jakaya Kikwete said on Wednesday night after talks with Comoran central government leaders on the island of Grand Comore. "We call on all the protagonists in this crisis to show restraint," Kikwete told Reuters. Anjouan and Moheli, which along with Grand Comore won independence from France as the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros in 1975, broke away a year ago complaining they had been impoverished by government corruption and neglect. An "independent" government was appointed on Anjouan this month.

Nairobi, 19 March 1998, 15:10 GMT

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IRIN Update No. 383 for Central and Eastern Africa (Thursday 26 March 1998)

UGANDA: Clinton, African leaders pledge to fight genocide

US President Bill Clinton and six African leaders ended their summit meeting in Entebbe yesterday (Wednesday) with pledges to fight genocide and work for economic growth and democracy, Reuters reported. The meeting concluded with the signing of an Entebbe Declaration of Principles. Speaking before flying off to South Africa, Clinton said they had "agreed to work together to banish genocide from this region and this continent." "Our efforts came too late for yesterday's victims," he added. "They must be in time to prevent tomorrow's victims." The US president also said he wanted to increase US aid to Africa to its previous level of some US $815 million per year. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni described Clinton as "far-sighted" in being able to see Africa's potential. The summit was attended by the leaders of Uganda, Kenya, DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania and Ethiopia.

The main points of the declaration were to: - define and build a US-Africa partnership for the 21st century - define strategies to integrate Africa into the world economy - strengthen and sustain regional security and African peacekeeping capacity - continue to cooperate against cross-border terrorism directed at civilians - pursue dialogue on democratisation while realising "there is no fixed model for democratic institutions or transformation".

Clinton meets Kabila, Moi

Clinton held separate meetings with Presidents Laurent-Desire Kabila of DRC and Daniel arap Moi of Kenya. Press reports quoted a Clinton aide as saying Kabila promised "fair elections" in his country, adding that the current ban on political activity was an interim measure necessary for "restoring order". Clinton reportedly told Kabila he had had a hard struggle to liberate DRC from authoritarian rule. "You haven't come this far to fail," Clinton was quoted as saying. "You have to help us help you." He also urged President Moi to open up Kenya's economy and accelerate political reform.

RWANDA: Genocide survivors say Clinton speech an "apology"

Earlier in the day, Clinton had made a brief visit to Kigali airport where he addressed government leaders and genocide survivors. AFP said he also met six survivors for private talks, after which he commented that "just listening to the survivors gave me reasons for hope". The Rwanda News Agency said survivors hailed Clinton's visit as a "testimony of sincere solidarity". "Clinton's speech was in a way an apology for the failure by the international community to stop the genocide," said Josue Kayijaho, vice-president of the genocide survivors' association, Ibuka.

"Critical problems" still to be addressed - Bizimungu

President Pasteur Bizimungu, in his speech at Kigali airport, also welcomed Clinton's visit as a "show of solidarity with the victims and a challenge to the international community to work together" to prevent another genocide. In his speech, broadcast live by Rwandan radio yesterday, Bizimungu stressed there were still "critical areas" in Rwanda needing international support and understanding. "Our post-genocide society is fragile and therefore Rwanda should be treated as a special case," he said.

No legal obstacles to full French parliamentary enquiry into genocide

French Justice Minister Elisabeth Guigou said yesterday there were no legal impediments to a fully-fledged parliamentary investigation into France's role in the 1994 genocide, AFP reported. Parliament's defence committee has set up a fact-finding probe to look into the issue, but Rwanda has rejected it as a "hoax", saying all the information is already available. The man heading the probe, former defence minister Paul Quiles, has said a full parliamentary investigative commission could not be set because of legal constraints connected to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

Rebels kill five students in attack on school

Five teenagers were killed and seven wounded on Tuesday night after their school was attacked by a group of Interahamwe militiamen, AFP said, citing the Rwanda News Agency. The incident occurred in Nkuli commune of Ruhengeri prefecture in the northwest. According to the school principal, Emmanuel Senzira, the rebels said on arrival that they had warned students to leave the school. They then opened fire.

Kidnapped nuns reportedly in no danger

Two Spanish nuns kidnapped by rebels in northwest Rwanda have been in touch with their families and believe they will be freed soon, Reuters reported, quoting the Spanish embassy in Dar es Salaam. They have reportedly been well treated, but there is no information as to their whereabouts. The nuns were captured with five Rwandan counterparts in Kivumu commune on Monday, but the Rwandans were released shortly afterwards.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: Rwandan refugee camp to be shut

The CAR authorities yesterday decided to close the Bouca refugee camp which houses some 200 Rwandan refugees, after local people attacked the camp in revenge for the deaths of two CAR policemen and their driver at the hands of four ex-FAR soldiers. UNHCR told IRIN yesterday four Hutu refugees were killed, but the CAR opposition daily 'Vouma' put the death toll at 40. The refugees will now be repatriated, the CAR information minister said, according to AFP.

TANZANIA: Food situation in camps serious - UNHCR

UNHCR has described the food situation in the Kigoma refugee camps as "very serious". A spokesperson told a briefing in Dar es Salaam yesterday the situation was not due to a food shortage within the country but because the roads are impassable after adverse weather conditions. WFP was therefore unable to transport some food stocks from Dar es Salaam, Issaka, Dodoma and Tanga. Elsewhere in the briefing, the spokesperson said 40 Burundian militiamen recently rounded up in the camps had declared their fighter status upon arrival in Tanzania. The Tanzanian government reportedly separated them from other refugees. It was noted that the 40 had been transferred to another camp at Tabora.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: UN team finds empty mass grave

UN investigators digging in northern DRC discovered a mass grave with all the bodies removed, a UN spokesman said yesterday, according to Reuters. Juan-Carlos Brandt said preliminary exploration of the site near Mbandaka on 18 March "confirmed the existence of at least one mass grave, whose contents appeared to have been removed several months after burial, possibly in an attempt to destroy evidence." The team was forced to pull out of Mbandaka at the weekend after hostility from local people.

SUDAN: Ethnic clashes erupt in West Darfur

Renewed communal violence broke out on Monday in Sudan's West Darfur state when Arab raiders attacked three villages of the non-Arab Mesaleit near the state capital, al-Genaina. A private newspaper the 'Akhbar al-Youm' said today that casualty figures are still to be assessed. Two parliamentary deputies from West Darfur requested "immediate assistance" by the central government to help restore order. A state of emergency was declared in Darfur and North Kordofan in December to curb armed banditry and ethnic clashes, AFP reported.

Army destroys SPLA base in Blue Nile

The Sudanese government said on Wednesday its forces killed 35 rebels in an attack on a Sudan People's Liberation Army base in eastern Blue Nile state. The official SUNA news agency said the government army suffered 10 dead and 28 wounded in the operation which destroyed the base in Kurmuk province. According to AFP, the town of Kurmuk itself has been under the control of opposition forces since January last year.

EAST AFRICA: FAO slams EU fish import ban

The FAO has criticised an EU ban on fish imports from East African countries affected by cholera. In a statement released yesterday, FAO said the move was not the most appropriate reaction. A better response would be to support improvements in hygiene, safe water supply, fish processing and storage. The statement stressed the risk of transmission from contaminated fish was negligible. Import restrictions "will disturb international trade and may encourage illegal trade, posing a potentially higher threat to consumers," FAO added. The countries affected by the ban are Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Mozambique.

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IRIN Update No. 387 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 1 April 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Draft constitution under debate

President Laurent-Desire Kabila is considering a draft constitution, handed to him yesterday (Tuesday) by a constitutional committee. According to media reports, the draft envisages a five-year presidency and English and French as official languages. Committee chairman Anicet Kashamura said the draft was similar to the US model comprising a president with wide-ranging powers and a vice-president, but no prime minister. The committee also drew up a provisional list of some 250 people who would not be allowed to contest the presidency. These include veteran opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi and former parliament speaker Laurent Monsengwo. In an interview with Reuters, Kashamura said: "All our compatriots who have compromised themselves, who have acquired property illegally or who have been involved in political killings or other human rights violations will not be allowed to stand."

Other crucial elements of the draft constitution include the nationality issue, although sources who have seen the draft told IRIN there are no major changes from previous laws. Kashamura, quoted by the Agence congolaise de presse (ACP) on Monday, had stressed that Congolese nationality was "exclusive" but could be "acquired".

Human rights probe reportedly facing problems in Goma

UN human rights chief Mary Robinson yesterday said the UN team probing alleged human rights violations was now facing problems in Goma. Last month, the mission was forced to pull out of the northwestern town of Mbandaka after facing hostility from the local population. Robinson said it was important that the DRC authorities assist the investigation. Meanwhile, DRC Information Minister Raphael Ghenda said he understood the reaction of local people, ACP reported. During a visit to Secli Wendji near Mbandaka where the investigators had been excavating, he expressed indignation over "this disrespect for the dead". The local population accused the investigators of disturbing traditional burial sites.

Ex-FAZ "sowing terror" in Kasai Occidental

Former Zairean soldiers are "sowing terror" in Kasai Occidental province, according to Floribert Chebeya, the president of the human rights group "La Voix des sans voix". According to the Agence congolaise de presse (ACP) yesterday, he told a news conference in Kinshasa that "uncontrolled ex-FAZ soldiers" were erecting barricades on public roads and looting from peaceful citizens.

RWANDA: 'Le Figaro' implicates France in 1994 plane crash

The French daily 'Le Figaro' on Monday said the crew of a plane which crashed in Kigali in 1994 killing the Rwandan and Burundian presidents were secretly working for the French government. One of the widows said the men had been given the military status of "killed in action" despite being civilians and were posthumously decorated by the government. The newspaper also claimed Soviet-made missiles which were part of French stocks were responsible for downing the plane. However in a statement to AFP, a top French gendarme Paul Barril described the allegations as "implausible and incoherent" and he "formally" denied any involvement. Barril was formerly second-in-command of an elite paramilitary unit.

Meanwhile, the parliamentary information mission probing France's involvement in the Rwanda genocide yesterday heard fresh testimonies from two experts who said the international community, including France and Belgium, was aware the massacres were being prepared. A Belgian lawyer, Eric Gillet, said nothing was done to stop the genocide when there was still time to do so, AFP reported.

BURUNDI: Concern over security in Bujumbura rural

The authorities in Bujumbura Rural have expressed concern over the security situation in displaced people's camps, especially in the communes of Gishubi and Kibuye, the Azania news agency reported yesterday. Over the past two weeks, 15,000 displaced people had arrived in the commune of Isale fleeing fighting in Gishubi and Kibuye, Azania said, adding that the local authorities had appealed for humanitarian assistance.

ANGOLA: Government says UNITA has not demobilised

The Angolan government has again accused the UNITA movement of failing to demobilise its troops ahead of yesterday's deadline for implementation of the 1994 Lusaka peace accord. According to a BBC report, it also remained unclear whether UNITA's shortwave radio "Voice of the Black Cockerel" had ceased broadcasting in compliance with the peace deal. UNITA leaders were meant to install themselves in the capital Luanda yesterday but failed to arrive, although the movement's secretary-general Lukamba Paulo Gato said they would come today (Wednesday). UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi has consistently expressed fears over his personal safety in the capital.

SUDAN: Government to send troops to contain clashes in west

President Omar al-Bashir is to send troops to western Sudan to contain communal clashes in which 23 people have been killed and over 50 villages torched. According to press reports, quoted by AFP, Bashir told a gathering of non-Arab Aringa tribesmen that troops would be despatched to "maintain order and impose the state's authority". Arab tribes have reportedly been attacking the homes of non-Arab communities in western Darfur state. Bashir claimed the clashes were "motivated by enemies of the nation who are planning to distract attention from the fighting in south and east Sudan".

MALARIA: British scientists develop possible preventive vaccine

Scientists in Britain have developed a vaccine against malaria which has proved 100 percent effective in mice, the BBC reported. The vaccine, produced by the Oxford Institute of Molecular Medicine, is due to be tested on humans next year, and if all goes well the two-part vaccine could be in use within five years. The scientists hope the same type of two-part vaccine may prove effective against diseases such as AIDS and Hepatitis-B.

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IRIN Update No. 390 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 4-6 April 1998)

RWANDA: Genocide anniversary commemorated

Rwanda today (Monday) marks the fourth anniversary of the genocide in which an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered. The violence was unleashed on 6 April 1994 after a plane crash in which Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana was killed. The Rwandan government plans a week of remembrance ceremonies , including the formal reburial of thousands of genocide victims. The head of the government commission for national reconciliation, Bernardin Rutazibwa, quoted by the BBC, noted that violence was still raging in the country. "There are the authors of genocide who continue to perpetrate massacres in the north," he said.

French foreign ministry to stay silent on genocide

The French foreign ministry has said it will not answer any more media enquiries regarding its role in the genocide. A ministry spokeswoman pointed out a parliamentary investigation into the matter was under way and therefore it would probe any allegations. She added that the ministry had expressed its "entire willingness" to cooperate with the enquiry, AFP reported. Edouard Balladur, who was prime minister at the time of the genocide, has agreed to give evidence to the enquiry on 21 April, along with three other ex-ministers from his cabinet.

Talks with IMF under way

Rwanda is negotiating a three-year loan with the IMF to help it repair its damaged economy. Finance Minister Donald Kaberuka told a news conference last week the country needed US $170 million. An IMF spokesman told Reuters negotiations were under way, but declined to specify the amount. Kaberuka said foreign borrowing was the only way out for a country burdened by massive external debt and the ravages of war. "In the last three years we have been depending on humanitarian assistance," he said. "It's high time we moved to sustainable development."

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Belgium denies weapons cache allegations

Belgium has strongly denied allegations by the DRC of gun-running in Lubumbashi. Congolese television on Saturday said the security services had discovered an arsenal of assault weapons at the Belgian consulate in DRC's second city. The television report claimed the arsenal was "enough to storm a fortress" and accused the Belgian diplomats of not declaring the weapons to the local authorities. However, a statement by the Belgian embassy in Kinshasa yesterday (Sunday) expressed "surprise" over the allegations, describing them as "either total ignorance of the facts or irresponsible and manipulative behaviour by certain people". The weapons consignment in question, he added, had been declared to the former authorities and to their successors who reportedly never gave formal authorisation to arrange the repatriation of the equipment. Belgian Foreign Minister Erik Derycke, speaking on Belgian television yesterday, accused the DRC authorities of "organising a dramatic set-up". "It has nothing to do with terrorism, but everything to do with the insecurity and policy which reigns in the Congo," he said.

Government warns against acts of destabilisation

A government statement, broadcast by DRC television on Saturday, expressed determination to oppose any act "aimed at destabilising the new regime" of President Laurent-Desire Kabila. The statement claimed a number of plots had been hatched against Kabila "through certain diplomats in embassies accredited to the DRC". The statement condemned "neo-colonialist policies implanted in our country and sordid games of interest".

AZADHO human rights organisation banned

The DRC authorities have banned the national human rights organisation AZADHO. Justice Minister Kongolo Mwenze, speaking on DRC television on Saturday, said AZADHO had no formal authorisation and had therefore been operating illegally. He accused the organisation of "indulging in political campaigns instead of providing objective reports", adding that it was funded by foreign groups and could not be considered Congolese. However, AZADHO's president Guillaume Ngefa - quoted by Radio France Internationale today - stated the ban would be ignored. "The government is looking for a scapegoat to cover its political and economic failure," he said. AZADHO would appeal to the Supreme Court, he added. The International Commission of Jurists today strongly condemned the outlawing of AZADHO and urged foreign governments to make aid conditional on respect for democracy and human rights.

'Le Palmares' daily said today the government wanted to replace AZADHO with its own human rights organisation to be known as l'Association congolaise pour la defense des droits humains.

Human Rights Watch last week charged that the Congolese authorities were cracking down on a range of independent voices to "silence criticism of their increasingly repressive policies". It called on the government to "cease attacks on civil society" and punish those responsible for harassing civil rights defenders.

List of "politically excluded" revoked

A presidential statement on Friday declared "null and void" a list of 248 names excluded from political activity issued by the constitutional commission earlier last week. The statement said commission president Anicet Kashamura had been acting in "an individual capacity" and the government distanced itself from the list. The commission's responsibilities were limited to drawing up a draft constitution for the third republic, the statement added.

Statement on UN mission to be issued

Information Minister Raphael Ghenda has announced the government will issue a full statement in the next 10 days on the UN investigation into alleged human rights violations, the BBC reported yesterday. He attacked the mission, describing it as part of a plot to destabilise the new leadership in Kinshasa.

DRC sovereignty must be respected aid-wise, minister says

Minister of State for the Economy Pierre-Victor Mpoyo has spelled out his country's policy on foreign aid. In comments broadcast by DRC television on Saturday, he bemoaned the lack of foreign assistance but stressed the country had been managing on its own resources. DRC's three-year development plan required an estimated US $3 billion. "We don't want our attention to be distracted with US $1 million aid here, US $500,000 there," he said. Any government wishing to help DRC should take into account the three-year plan and respect the country's sovereignty. "If it [aid] is not within this plan, then we don't want such aid," he stated.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Train service suspended due to Brazzaville fighting

Humanitarian sources in Brazzaville told IRIN today that fighting was still under way in the city's Mouyondzi area and therefore trains between Brazzaville and the southern city of Pointe Noire had been suspended. Clashes broke out last week when a group of former militiamen, loyal to former president Pascal Lissouba, refused to hand over their weapons to police during a disarmament operation.

BURUNDI: Reform of education system

The ministry of secondary and higher education has stated that preparations are under way to reform the country's devastated education system, Azania news agency reported. According to recent figures, over a million children should attend school but in fact only 600,000 are receiving an education. Only 20 percent of primary school children attain secondary school. In a bid to address the issue, some 200 local educational establishments have been constructed. However teachers' unions are calling for better wages which would cost the government an extra six billion Burundian francs, Azania said.

Finance minister discusses debt repayment with Ugandan counterpart

The finance ministers of Burundi and Uganda held talks in Kampala last week to try and resolve a dispute over millions of dollars owed to Bujumbura, the 'EastAfrican' weekly reported today. Uganda owes US $26.5 million for goods supplied by Burundi to the Ugandan military over 10 years ago. Burundi Finance Minister Astere Girukwigomba told the weekly he hoped agreement would finally be reached after years of fruitless negotiations. The sales of goods, such as blankets, cigarettes and matresses, by Burundi businessmen were on credit and were guaranteed by the government. Ugandan officials acknowledged that Burundi was owed money but said issues such as exchange rates and debt strategy had first to be worked out.

UGANDA: Hotel bombings kill four

Bomb attacks on two cafes in central Kampala late on Saturday killed four people and wounded six, news reports said. Minister of State for Political Affairs Anama Mbabazi said: "It's early days yet, but the security services have some suspicions." A security official told AFP that Ugandan intelligence suspected that a Sudanese-sponsored group, which he did not identify, had carried out the attacks. The Khartoum-backed group, he said, had links with the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a rebel group active in western Uganda. The first blast at Speke Hotel took place at around 21:00. Two Burundians wounded in the explosion died while undergoing surgery at Mulago hospital. Two Ugandan waitresses hit by the second bomb, which went off at 23:30 in the nearby Nile Grill bar, were declared dead on arrival at the same hospital.

Army on alert along Sudan border

The Ugandan army has been placed on full alert to prevent infiltration by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) from across the Sudanese border, according to the 'New Vision' newspaper. The official daily reported last week that the army would occupy suspected entry routes. An army spokesman denied that extra troops had been mobilised for the operation.

SUDAN: Garang supports ceasefire

Sudanese rebel leader John Garang has announced his support for a ceasefire "on humanitarian grounds" but "lamented that the other side used the opportunity to rearm and reorganise its forces," the official Kenya News Agency (KNA) reported on Monday. The Nairobi office of Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) told AFP that his comments were neither an acceptance nor a rejection of a ceasefire call by the Khartoum government ahead of peace talks due to be held in Nairobi at an unspecified date later this month. The comments came during a weekend meeting at Lokichokio, on the Kenya-Sudan border, with representatives of the regional Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which is sponsoring the Nairobi talks, the news agency said.

At least 55 conscripts drown in escape bid

At least 55 young conscripts drowned in a mass bid to escape compulsory military training in Sudan. The Khartoum daily 'Alwan' reported today that 260 recruits were still missing on Sunday from the Ailefoun camp, about 30 km southeast of Khartoum. They were among 2,100 young men taken to the camp by force after being rounded up as evaders. The deaths occurred when an unknown number of conscripts fled in a boat which sank on Thursday night on the Blue Nile, apparently overloaded. Every 18-year-old Sudanese male has to perform 18-24 months of national military service before he can obtain work or travel abroad, AFP said.

Political parties to be legalised if committed to proposed constitution

Sudan's Islamic government plans to allow the formation of political parties if they are committed to the "fundamentals" of a planned new constitution, press reports said on Sunday. Khartoum is planning to hold a referendum in late April and early May on the controversial draft constitution, already passed by the national assembly. If it passes the referendum, it will come into force in June. However, the hardline Islamic Muslim Brotherhood has criticised the draft. In a statement to AFP, the organisation claimed it "is not an Islamic constitution because it contradicts the basic Islamic principles." It criticised the proposal for giving citizenship, rather than faith, as the basis for equal rights and duties. It thus "treats a Muslim and an infidel" on an equal footing and "enables a non-Muslim to assume public office in an Islamic state," the group said.

Nairobi, 6 April 1998, 14:10 gmt

[ENDS]

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IRIN Update No. 391 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 7 April 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Kabila visits North Kivu to "restore order"

President Laurent-Desire Kabila has accused the UN and other international organisations of helping rebels in the east of the country. During a visit to North Kivu yesterday (Monday), he said he had come to restore order, DRC state radio reported. He also ruled out negotiations with Mayi-Mayi rebels and vowed to wipe out his enemies. "I have come to Kivu to bring order and for that I don't expect to negotiate with anyone," he said.

DRC-Ugandan rebels team up in Beni

Fighting has been under way for several days in the Beni area of North Kivu, pitting the army against Mayi-Mayi rebels allied to Ugandan insurgents of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). News reports quoted Major Jean-Pierre Ondekani, commander of the DRC army's 10th brigade, as saying mopping-up operations were under way and calm was slowly returning to the area. According to AFP, a senior Ugandan officer said the rebels attacked Beni last Friday probably to try and capture arms from the brigade headquarters there. He added the attack showed their resources were dwindling.

RWANDA: Interahamwe kill seven in Gitarama area

The authorities will today (Tuesday) unveil a special national monument to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the 1994 genocide, according to a BBC report. Meanwhile, killings continued in the country. The Rwanda News Agency reported that seven people were massacred by Interahamwe militiamen in the central Gitarama prefecture on Friday night. The seven, from Rutobwe commune, were all genocide survivors, local officials said. The rebels hacked them to death using clubs and machetes. In the northern Ruhengeri area, the military were increasing mopping-up operations against rebels active in the Nyamugali, Cyeru, Ruhondo and Kinigi communes, RNA said.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Central African leaders meet to discuss security

The presidents of Congo-Brazzaville, Chad and the Central African Republic met in the southern Congolese city of Pointe Noire on Friday to discuss security in the region. Radio France Internationale said they pledged to restore and maintain peace and security within their countries and along their borders.

Humanitarian sources confirmed to IRIN today the rail service between Brazzaville and Pointe Noire has been suspended since Saturday due to fighting in the Mouyondzi area, a town on the railway line about halfway between the two cities. [IRIN erroneously reported yesterday (no.390) that Mouyondzi was a district of Brazzaville]. The sources point out the fighting does not appear to present a direct risk to Brazzaville at the moment.

Sassou Nguesso tries to calm fears of Pointe Noire attack

At the weekend, Congolese President Denis Sassou Nguesso tried to appease fears of an imminent attack on Pointe-Noire by supporters of ousted president Pascal Lissouba, Gabonese radio reported. It said the rumours circulating about the attack had seriously disrupted the social climate in the city, as militiamen were said to be strengthening their positions in the area. The president has described the rumours as unfounded, but according to the radio security has been stepped up in Pointe Noire. Angolan troop presence is less obvious, it added.

SUDAN: Government troops reportedly surrounded by rebels north of Juba

Rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) say they have surrounded government troops some 60 km north of Juba. According to opposition Voice of Sudan radio, government soldiers launched two major attacks against SPLA positions on Saturday, but these were repulsed after intensive air raids and fierce fighting.

GREAT LAKES: OCHA chief outlines priorities

UN Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Sergio Vieira de Mello has stressed that a UN priority for the Great Lakes region is ensuring a smooth transition between humanitarian and rehabilitation activities. He also called for a better regional coordination of humanitarian work. The Great Lakes, he told IRIN in an interview, "require an integrated, non-paternalistic, preventive approach, based on objective, non-ethnic analysis of the different conflicts and their solutions". [For full interview refer to IRIN Interview with Sergio Vieira de Mello on 30 March 1998, published on 6 April 1998].

UNHCR-OAU to host ministerial meeting in Kampala next month

Preparations are under way for a UNHCR/OAU-hosted regional meeting in Kampala on 8-9 May. The meeting will discuss issues related to the protection and impact of refugees on host states. Regional countries will be represented at ministerial level, UNHCR said.

Nairobi, 7 April 1998, 12:30 gmt

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IRIN Update No. 392 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 8 April 1998)

RWANDA: Bizimungu urges Europe to help genocide survivors

President Pasteur Bizimungu yesterday (Tuesday) pointed out it was Europe's duty to help genocide survivors because it had failed to stop the slaughter in 1994. In a speech in the western prefecture of Kibuye to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the genocide, Bizimungu said Rwanda bore no grudge towards Europe. "When we evoke the responsibility of some European countries, we don't want confrontation," he said. But, he added, Europe and the UN were "primarily responsible for the type of chaos we have here". "These people, victims of the atrocities...need assistance and this is their right because Europe is responsible for these atrocities." He said he was pleased European countries were admitting their role in the massacres, but noted that many genocide suspects were still at large in Europe and appealed that they be brought to book. During the genocide, some 50,000 people were killed by Hutu extremists in the hills at Bisesero, where yesterday's ceremony was held.

French missiles downed Habyarimana's plane, expert says

A Belgian academic yesterday stated that French missiles were responsible for bringing down the plane that killed Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana and his Burundi counterpart Cyprien Ntaryamira on 6 April 1994. AFP said Philippe Reyntjens told a French parliamentary investigation his information was based on military sources from Belgium, Britain and the US. On Monday, former French cooperation minister Bernard Debre had alleged the missiles were from US stocks and had been supplied by Uganda, a claim strongly denied by Kampala. "France in principle knows, or has the ability to know, who was behind the attack," Reyntjens said.

TANZANIA: Interahamwe training camp reportedly set up

The Agence burundaise de presse reports that a camp has been established in northwest Tanzania housing mainly Interahamwe and ex-FAR refugees. The camp, situated at Mbuba in the Rurenge area, reportedly houses some 1,200 such refugees who are undergoing paramilitary training. They had been hiding in remote villages to avoid returning home to Rwanda, ABP said. Humanitarian sources recently told IRIN there were reports of a new rebel group forming in Kibungo in southeast Rwanda.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Kabila visiting Ethiopia

President Laurent-Desire Kabila arrived in Addis Ababa on a three-day visit to Ethiopia yesterday, Ethiopian television reported. His Ethiopian counterpart Negaso Gidada expressed his country's support for the revolution in DRC, stressing that both countries had managed to eliminate oppressive regimes. Kabila noted that DRC had not received the expected response from the international community, but he would continue to talk to donors to try and resolve the country's economic problems. According to the Ethiopian News Agency, Kabila also announced that an international conference on the Great Lakes region would soon be held in Kinshasa.

UNICEF expresses surprise over Kabila's accusations

UNICEF has expressed "great surprise" over Kabila's accusations that it is helping rebels in eastern DRC. During a visit to Goma this week, Kabila accused UNICEF of "serving as a mailbox" for the Mayi-Mayi rebels. A UNICEF spokeswoman told IRIN today (Wednesday) the agency was holding high-level negotiations with the DRC authorities. She said that on 4 March, the military had arrested a UNICEF local staff member in Goma who is still being detained. Later, UNICEF-Goma's communication equipment was also confiscated, she added. "These regrettable incidents come after UNICEF has been working in this country for more than 36 years," she said. The Belgian daily 'Le Soir' yesterday reported the arrest of the local staff member. "Relations are tense because the UN agency is concerned over the existence of some 18,000 child soldiers and would like them to be rapidly demobilised," 'Le Soir' wrote.

Belgium accused of "insulting" DRC

The DRC foreign ministry has issued a press release accusing Belgium of "insulting behaviour". The statement, broadcast by DRC television yesterday, expressed "deep indignation" over comments by Belgian Foreign Minister Eric Derycke after Congo had accused Belgium of stashing weapons at its consulate in Lubumbashi. It deplored Belgium's "constant will to interfere in the DRC's domestic affairs", adding that Congo wanted to pursue cooperation with Belgium and hoped it would continue to finance its three-year development programme.

BURUNDI: Human rights report accuses both sides of killing

A report by Human Rights Watch today accused both sides in the Burundi conflict of killing civilians. According to AFP, it said Hutu rebels had summarily executed civilians and looted their property, forcing them to cultivate crops to feed rebel troops and leaving people without an adequate food supply. Meanwhile, soldiers had forced people into regroupment camps which were ill-equipped and where thousands of people had died, Human Rights Watch said, adding that troops were also killing people in the camps.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Insecurity continues to plague Brazzaville

Sporadic shooting, frequent looting and banditry continue to be reported in Brazzaville. According to humanitarian sources, the insecurity is largely caused by ex-militiamen who are resisting the government's disarmament and demobilisation operation. As a result, much of Brazzaville's civilian population stays indoors after the sun sets. However, some improvement in the overall security situation has been noted in the city over the past couple of weeks.

Human rights group protests summary executions

A Congolese human rights group, L'Observatoire congolaise des droits de l'homme (OCDH) has issued a public statement to protest against summary executions and arbitrary arrests of actual or supposed supporters of the defeated Pascal Lissouba regime. The human rights violations are being committed by armed men in military uniform, the OCDH said.

New oil production facility to boost output by 20 percent

Meanwhile, President Sassou Nguesso inaugurated a new AGIP oil production facility last month at Kitina near Pointe-Noire. The facility, run in association with Chevron and Hydro-Congo, is expected to increase Congo's total oil production by about 20 percent according to local media. The country now produces about 10.3 million mt of oil a year.

SUDAN: People fleeing fighting in Eastern Equatoria, Western Upper Nile

According to the latest WFP Emergency Report, people in Sudan's Eastern Equatoria province are leaving their homes for refugee camps in Uganda and Kenya. Fighting has also increased in Western Upper Nile, displacing large numbers of people, and resulting in parts of the province remaining inaccessible to WFP and Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS).

WFP warns funds needed to purchase food

The report adds that last week's clearance by Khartoum for an expanded number of delivery sites adds to the urgency for further funds to purchase food and non-food supplies and to support additional aircraft to airlift the supplies. WFP has received only US $7.3 million out of a total of US $58.8 million requested under the UN Inter-agency Consolidated Appeal for Sudan, launched in February, which seeks a total of US $109 million to meet the emergency needs of more than four million drought and war affected Sudanese.

UGANDA: Kampala bombing on eve of Clinton's visit - minister

Ugandan rebels exploded a small home-made bomb in central Kampala on the eve of US President Bill Clinton's visit, Minister of State for Internal Affairs Tom Butime told AFP on Wednesday. He said the bomb exploded on 23 March at Platinum House, less than a kilometre from the Sheraton Hotel, where Clinton stayed. The government had attributed the explosion, which caused no casualties, to faulty electrical wiring. The bomb "went off as planned, but it was very mild," Butime said. He said the device was planted by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). He accused the rebel group of being behind a series of explosions in Kampala, including Saturday's attack on two hotel cafes. US diplomats have denied that the explosion at Platinum House was a bomb.

Nairobi, 8 April 1998, 13:20 gmt

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RWANDA: Upsurge in violence as over 100 killed in past week

Over 100 people have been killed in violence perpetrated by Interahamwe militiamen since Rwanda commemorated the fourth anniversary of the 1994 genocide last Monday. In the latest violence, according to the Rwanda News Agency, 10 people were killed in two separate incidents in Nyamabuye commune, central Gitarama prefecture, on Saturday night. Five people died when their vehicles came under fire, while five others - all genocide survivors - were killed in their homes. The prefect of Gitarama, Desire Nyandwi, narrowly escaped death when his vehicle was ambushed. His driver was killed. Army spokesman Emmanuel Ndahiro told RNA a search was underway for the attackers. In nearby Tabwe sector, five women - also genocide survivors - were hacked to death with machetes, knives and hoes.

On Friday night, 24 people were slaughtered in Gitarama's Musambira commune, RNA reported. Two families were almost entirely wiped out. Local officials said a group of unidentified people, some wearing military uniforms, others dressed in long overall coats and armed with guns and traditional weapons, descended on the homes of the two families, killing people while they slept. Some of the victims, including babies, had been decapitated. Military sources blamed the carnage on the Interahamwe and said an investigation was underway, RNA said.

In northern Ruhengeri prefecture, a total of 33 people were killed on Thursday in an attack on a displaced camp in Nyarutovu commune. RNA said local residents estimated 500 Hutu militiamen raided the camp, initially killing 28 people and wounding 36. A further five people died of their injuries in hospital. Twenty assailants were reportedly killed by the army. AFP quoted military sources as saying a new offensive had been launched against the rebels following the attack. The French news agency also said 11 soldiers were killed in a rebel attack earlier last week in Nyamugari village, Ruhengeri prefecture.

RNA said these incidents towards the end of last week brought to 103 the number of people killed since last Monday.

UN to reactivate enquiry commission into illegal arms sales

The UN Security Council on Thursday voted to reactivate an international commission of enquiry into illegal arms sales to the ex-FAR and Interahamwe militiamen. A resolution adopted by the Security Council calls on the commission to "identify parties aiding and abetting the illegal sale" of weapons. It also calls for recommendations relating to the illegal flow of arms in the Great Lakes region and urges international cooperation in countering hate radio broadcasts and publications. The commission's last report in November 1996, published in January this year, accused the former Zaire of playing a central role in arming the Rwandan ex-government forces and militias who had sought refuge in the country.

No reason for optimism, EU envoy says

The EU special envoy to the Great Lakes region, Aldo Ajello, on Friday commented there was "no reason to be optimistic" about the situation in the region, AFP reported. "The powder and the fire are moving closer together each day," he warned. Speaking in Kigali, where he had been attending genocide commemorative ceremonies, he added it was necessary to "close the wound still bleeding over the genocide" before Rwanda's problems could be addressed. He noted that the Hutu insurgency "has no spokesman and...according to our information is bent on continuing genocide and has no intention of joining society".

Cholera reported in Cyangugu

A serious outbreak of cholera has been reported in the southwest Cyangugu prefecture, according to Rwandan radio on Saturday. Worst affected were Kamembe, Bugarama and Cyimbogo communes where an estimated 86 people were suffering from the disease. Some of them had died, the radio said. The US NGO, IRC, has warned of a severe cholera outbreak in the neighbouring South Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Economic programme to focus on private sector

Unveiling a three-year economic programme, a senior official in the finance and planning ministry explained the government would focus on the private sector to bring about structural and institutional reforms. The director of macroeconomic policy, Prosper Musafiri, said the programme - due to start in August - envisaged reform of the civil service and transforming the agriculture-based economy into one that was export-orientated, RNA reported. The ministry has indicated the programme will depend heavily on foreign financing. The aim is to achieve 7.5 percent economic growth over three years and keep inflation down at five percent.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: UN probe suspended

The probe by the UN team investigating alleged human rights violations has been suspended until further notice, news media reported. The move, ordered by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, follows the temporary detention of a Canadian member of the team at Kinshasa airport and the seizure of some documents he was carrying. On Friday, the head of the mission, Atsu-Koffi Amega, accused the DRC authorities of snooping and photocopying documents, AFP said. This was a serious violation of the team's diplomatic immunity, Amega added. Another member of the team, Paul Laberge, quoted by AFP, said the seizure of the documents meant the enquiry's confidentiality had been broken and the security of witnesses could not be guaranteed. UN spokesman Juan Carlos Brandt on Thursday said the team's work would be suspended "in view of the serious nature of the circumstances". The permanent under-secretary at the DRC presidency, Yerodia Abdoulaye Ndombasi, told a news conference on Friday the investigator had been detained for passport irregularities.

Government authorisation needed to use private airstrips

The DRC government over the weekend declared the closure of all private airstrips in the country, DRC television reported. The airstrips can now only be used with special authorisation from the minister of state for the interior. Explaining the measure, Transport Minister Henri Mova said it was designed so that the authorities could control the movement of planes and pilots. Observers point out air travel is the only way to reach remote parts of the country.

Newspaper editor arrested

The editor of 'Le Palmares' daily was arrested by security agents on Saturday, according to news reports. Michel Kadi Luya was detained as he prepared to chair a meeting of the newspaper's board of directors. Apparently no reason was given for his arrest. AFP yesterday (Sunday) quoted the justice ministry as saying it was unaware of the detention. Meanwhile another journalist, Mossi Mwassi who reports for the BBC, was released the same day after being held for four months on charges of spying.

Over 20 human rights groups approved by government

According to a BBC report, the authorities have approved the registration of more than 20 human rights groups, but refused many others the right to operate legally. The BBC points out the decision comes a week after the main civil rights group AZADHO was banned for allegedly operating illegally and interfering in politics.

Kabila back from Ethiopia

President Laurent-Desire Kabila returned from a five-day visit to Ethiopia on Saturday, saying the two countries had pledged to strengthen cooperation. Speaking on arrival in Kinshasa, Kabila said Ethiopia supported the country in its "dispute with countries which claim to be friends of Congo". On Thursday, Kabila had to postpone a speech to the OAU because of illness, according to AFP. He held talks the following day with OAU Secretary-General Dr Salim Ahmed Salim on issues concerning DRC and the Great Lakes region, Ethiopia television reported.

Opposition party protests information minister's visit to France

The opposition Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) party has protested against the visit to France this week of Information Minister Raphael Ghenda. The UDPS representative in Paris, Crispin Kabasele Tshimanga, expressed "astonishment" that the French authorities had allowed the visit to go ahead. Belgium earlier refused to grant the minister a visa, saying the visit was "inappropriate" after relations between the two countries plummeted following Congolese accusations that the Belgians were stashing weapons at their consulate in Lubumbashi.

BURUNDI: Regional embargo not working - EU envoy

The regional economic embargo imposed on Burundi is ineffective, EU special envoy Aldo Ajello said on Friday. Speaking in Kigali, he said the sanctions were "violated every day", AFP reported. But he added: "It is not the EU's problem and we must respect the decision of the countries in the region that imposed it."

UGANDA: Five injured in Kampala grenade attack

Five people were injured in a grenade attack on a popular bar in a Kampala suburb on Sunday, media reports said. The blast at the Bermuda Triangle bar was suspected to have been a stick grenade hurled from the grounds of a nearby mosque, according to the BBC. The recent spate of explosions in Kampala, were the result of home-made bombs. Sunday's explosion occurred despite tightened security in the city for the Easter weekend. The police on Thursday announced the formation of a new national task force against terrorism, the official 'New Vision' newspaper reported. The taskforce has a bomb disposal and fast-response capability, a police spokesman said.

ADF kill 13 in Kasese

Allied Democratic Forces rebels killed 13 people, wounded nine, and abducted at least 30 in two attacks in southwestern Kasese District on Thursday. According to the 'New Vision', the army killed one of the rebel commanders. The newspaper said that some 100 insurgents were involved in the two attacks on trading centres in Kyabarungira and Kicwamba sub-counties.

Army deployed to end cattle raids

The Ugandan army has been deployed in two southeastern districts bordering Kenya hit by raids by Karamojong cattle rustlers, the 'New Vision' reported on Friday. Ten people have died in Karamojong raids in Kapchorwa and Mbale Districts since 6 April, launched in reprisal for an attack by rival Pokot pastoralists two days earlier, the paper said. The Minister of State for Karamoja, Peter Lokeris, said Karamojong community leaders have been mobilised to appeal to the herdsmen to return to the Karamoja region in eastern and northeastern Uganda.

World Bank/IMF approve US $650 million debt relief

The World Bank and IMF have approved nearly US $650 million in debt relief for Uganda under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative, state radio said on Thursday. A senior finance ministry official said the debt relief would release extra funds for spending on priority social areas. According to a World Bank statement, discounted to today's values, relief from all of Uganda's creditors will be worth US $350 million, to which the World Bank and IMF will contribute about US $160 million and US $69 million, respectively. This amounts to a 20 percent reduction in Uganda's external debt.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Pointe-Noire blacked out by rebel attack

An attack by pro-Pascal Lissouba militiamen on a hydro-electric dam in southern Congo blacked out the economic capital Pointe Noire last week. "Pointe Noire and the cities of the south have been plunged into darkness because of Lissouba's Cocoyes militia, who attacked a transformer of the Moukoukoulou dam," official radio, monitored by AFP, said on Thursday. Power had not been restored on Thursday, after a two day blackout. The power plant, some 300 km west of Brazzaville, supplies electricity to all southern cities as well as part of the capital's power.

ANGOLA: Luanda announces measures for Savimbi's protection

The Angolan government on Friday announced security measures to protect UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi. Some 400 men based in Lobito, Luanda and in the central region of Angola will guarantee Savimbi's security, the government said. Currently living in the UNITA strongholds of Andulo and Bailundo in central Angola, Savimbi has yet to announce when he will move to the capital Luanda, having so far stayed away ostensibly for security reasons, AFP reported.

UNITA said on Thursday it would cooperate to restore peace, Angolan TV reported. UNITA senior official Antonio Dembo said at a press conference that Savimbi's return to Luanda "will depend on trust and security that government and UNITA can create in Luanda." He demanded that the government hand over the remains of UNITA leaders killed in the capital when the country's civil war resumed in late 1992. He also called for the lifting of UN sanctions against the party.

Institute says threat of war remains

The threat of civil war in Angola remains, according to a report by the Johannesburg-based Institute for Security Studies (ISS). The ISS says a rift has emerged within UNITA between those opposed to war and hardliners refusing to trust the Angolan government's peace-making efforts, South Africa's 'Mail&Guardian' reported. "The most likely time for a resumption of larger-scale military operations on the part of FAA [Angolan Armed Forces] is at the end of the rainy season in April," says the report. However, it quotes an anonymous adviser to Savimbi who claims the prospect of war is more distant now: "The situation remains dangerous in Angola, but not as dangerous as it was a year ago." He also lambasts the UN's peace efforts as cosmetic. "The core issue is not reconciliation, but formal compliance (with the Lusaka Accord). The international community is trying to reduce the cost of its peacekeeping operation without looking at genuine reconciliation."

SUDAN: Soldiers killed in retaliation for "massacre" of young conscripts

The opposition National Democratic Alliance said on Saturday its fighters had killed 12 government soldiers in the southeast of the country, AFP reported. A statement by the group issued in Cairo said its forces "ambushed" a convoy in the region of Gedaref near the Ethiopian border. It said the ambush was "retaliation" for what it called Khartoum's "massacre" of 120 young government conscripts on 3 April in a military camp southeast of Khartoum. It said the 120 conscripts were shot and 140 drowned after they mutinied over the army's refusal to let them return home for the Moslem sacrifice of Al-Adha. The government has said that 55 young conscripts who fled the camp drowned when their overloaded boat capsized on the Blue Nile.

TANZANIA: 100 miners feared dead in pit floods

More than 100 miners are feared dead after heavy rains flooded some 14 pits in the Arusha area on Friday. Prime Minister Frederick Sumaye has called on all miners in the region to stop work and instead help in the rescue mission for their trapped colleagues, state radio said. Three bodies were recovered and 21 people dug out alive on Sunday.

Nairobi, 13 April 1998, 12:50 gmt

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UNITEDNATIONS Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 401 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 22 April 1998)

RWANDA: First 23 genocide perpetrators to be executed on Friday

The first executions of people convicted of carrying out Rwanda's 1994 genocide will take place on Friday at 10:00 a.m. local time, state radio announced yesterday (Tuesday). The number announced in Radio Rwanda's first broadcast on the issue was initially 33, but the Rwandan News Agency later reported Justice Minister Faustin Nteziryayo explaining that: "only 23 will be executed, because the files of other convicts who have requested presidential clemency have not yet been completed." The radio report said 34 genocide convicts were originally affected by the impending executions, but one of them had reportedly died in prison. Five locations have been selected for the public executions. They are as follows: Nyamirambo Soccer Stadium in the capital Kigali, Nyamata in Kigali Rural, Cyasemakamba in eastern Kibungo prefecture, Murambi in northeastern Umutara prefecture, and Gikongoro in Gikongoro prefecture. All those to be executed had applied for the presidential clemency, but the latter was refused.

Annan likely to visit UN Tribunal in Arusha

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is expected to visit the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), in Arusha, northern Tanzania, Fondation Hirondelle quoted ICTR President Laity Kama as saying. He said the visit was set for 6-7 May during Annan's upcoming tour of Africa. Fondation Hirondelle quoted Kama as saying this visit "symbolises the importance attached to the ICTR within the UN organisation."

Meanwhile, the weekly 'EastAfrican' has reported that the ICTR could move out of Tanzania if requests for more space and adequate security are not granted. It said a UN report complained of a lack of cooperation from the Tanzanian authorities and recommended the transfer of the Tribunal, adding Nairobi was considered as a possible new location. Tribunal officials are reported to be holding talks with government officials and are seeking to meet with President Benjamin Mpaka before Annan's visit.

In Geneva yesterday, the UN Commission on Human Rights expressed concern at delays in the proceedings of the Rwandan genocide tribunal and fears that guilty parties were evading justice, news agencies reported. In a unanimous decision, the 53 member states urged full cooperation with the ICTR and with the Rwandan government to ensure that guilty parties were brought to justice. The resolution expressed worry both at "the slow rate of progress in the proceedings" and that "perpetrators of the genocide and other gross violations of human rights continue to evade justice."

Missiles delivered via Belgium - 'Le Soir'

The missiles that downed the plane of Rwanda's Hutu president Juvenal Habyarimana in 1994 transited through Belgium and former Zaire, the daily 'Le Soir' paper claimed in a report yesterday. Sourcing its report to DRC army intelligence, 'Le Soir' stated that a batch of ground-to-air missiles was shipped to former Zaire after being stocked at the Zairean embassy in Brussels.

AFP quoted the paper as saying the devices used to shoot down the plane were transported just beforehand from the Belgian port of Ostende to Goma in eastern Zaire on the Rwandan border.

Health ministry announces action plan over malaria outbreak

In response to an increasing malaria epidemic in Rwanda, the Ministry of Health has prepared an Emergency Action Plan to respond to the problem. It is estimated that the average number of malaria cases per month is 80,000, a substantial increase over figures for the same period in previous years. The epidemic is explained in part by climatic changes which have allowed the mosquito vector to increase in number. The Emergency Action Plan focuses on the supply of anti-malarial medicine and mosquito nets together with public information campaigns. The total cost of the Emergency Action Plan is US $1.45 million.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: DRC, Rwandan authorities meet on border security

DRC radio reported a meeting took place in Bukavu this Monday between the Congolese authorities from South Kivu and their counterparts from Cyangugu prefecture in southwestern Rwanda to look at ways of improving security on their common border. The meeting was chaired by South Kivu Governor Jean-Charles Magabe. The meeting agreed that in future people crossing at Ruzizi-one, Ruzizi-two and Bugarama border points would need special travel documents in addition to identity papers. At all other crossing points, travellers will only need their identity papers which, according to a communique from the meeting, "they will deposit at the border and then be given a slip valid for not more than 24 hours." The meeting also agreed that from now on Congolese authorities travelling to Uvira or Bukavu via Rwanda in government vehicles would be allowed to cross the border without any other documents apart from a mission order. Meanwhile, Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame returned to Kigali today after a short trip to Angola where he told reporters he had discussed the issue of the return of Rwandan refugees from that country.

Insecurity reported in Butembo area

Humanitarian sources in Goma reported to IRIN that rebels attacked Butembo in North Kivu at the beginning of last week. The road between Goma and Butembo was closed by local authorities on 14 April and military reinforcements were deployed in the area. The sources said the road was reopened last Saturday, but added that an operation to remove local populations living along the borders with Rwanda and Uganda was ongoing. DRC authorities have frequently denounced rebel activity in North Kivu, which is believed to emanate from a combination of Mayi-Mayi and Interahamwe elements. A local NGO source said the town of Butembo had been surrounded by DRC army since the 13 April and house-to-house searches had been carried out.

BURUNDI: At least 49 dead in fresh fighting - AFP

AFP reported that rebels in Burundi had killed at least 15 people and wounded many others in attacks on the villages of Rubingo and Bandagura, near Bujumbura, at dawn today. Quoting government officials, the agency said another 34 people - 30 rebels, two soldiers and two civilians - were killed on Friday in the southwestern Lake Tanganyika town of Rumonge in a clash between army soldiers and rebels. Army spokesman Isaie Nibizi was quoted as saying dozens were killed in Wednesday's attacks, but he could confirm only 15 dead and 10 wounded.

KENYA: Cholera kills 1,571, Rift Valley fever outbreak said over

WHO Kenya told IRIN today that Kenya's cholera outbreak was declining, but that 1,571 people had died in an epidemic lasting nine months. Figures from the Kenyan Ministry of Health indicate 41,126 reported cases of cholera between June 1997 and March 1998. The Coast and Nyanza provinces were the worst affected, accounting for over 30,000 cases. The national case fatality rate was 3.8 percent. Medical guidelines suggest that only one percent of cholera victims need die, given proper treatment.

Floods in Kenya contributed to the cholera epidemic, as well as an outbreak of a haemorrhagic disease thought to be Rift Valley Fever. A study by the Center for Disease Control, WHO, the Kenyan Ministry of Health, the South African Institute for Virology and other specialists discovered that, of a sample of patients thought to have suffered Rift Valley Fever, only 40 percent tested positive for the disease. Malaria, cholera and malnutrition are thought to have contributed to the mysterious disease outbreak which killed over 400 people, and led to the deaths of large numbers of livestock.

Pokot, Marakwet in peace agreement

Members of the Pokot and the Marakwet ethnic groups who for the past two weeks have been involved in violent cattle raids, yesterday passed a peace resolution to restore order in the two districts, according to the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation. A peace and reconciliation meeting held in Kitale and chaired by the Rift Valley Provincial Commissioner was attended by political, administrative and church leaders from the region, the state broadcast organisation reported. The two communities agreed that stolen cattle would not be pursued by the owners, but by security personnel aided by leaders selected from both sides. The cattle rustling which broke out late last month has left at least 17 people dead though other media sources have put the figure much higher.

KENYA-UGANDA: Plans to ease congestion at Mombasa Port

The Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) has taken action to ease congestion at Mombasa port, a KPA official told IRIN today. This came after a visit to the port last week by a Ugandan delegation led by Minister for Trade and Industry Abel Rwendeire to complain about the delay to cargo and goods destined for Uganda. The official, who declined to be named, said the issues raised by the Ugandan delegation included: "slow documentation, security of cargo especially vehicles, pilferage, and the possibility of allocating to Uganda a section of the port." Among the changes KPA has agreed to implement are: centralisation of documentation of Ugandan cargo, thorough checking of vehicles in the ship and after off-loading, a perimeter fence installed around vehicles, increased civilian and uniformed police at the port and the allocation of a section of the port to Uganda three months from now. Rwendeire told IRIN that he was happy with the proposed changes, but stressed: "What remains is the follow up."

UGANDA: Uganda counts cost of water hyacinth

The Uganda Electricity Board (UEB) loses at least 210 million Ugandan shillings ($180,258) every month due to water hyacinth. UEB's Managing Director Simon D'ujanga told IRIN today about $34,335 was spent "in removing the rotting weed from the cooling system of the machines and another $145,923 in lost generation." Uganda's Ministry of Natural Resources told the weekly 'EastAfrican' that about 2000-4000 hectares of Uganda's Lake Victoria territorial waters were infested by the weed.

Nairobi, 22 April 1998, 15:00 GMT

[ENDS]

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IRIN Update No. 405 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 28 April 1998)

SUDAN: "Sheer desperation" in Bahr al-Ghazal, WFP says

WFP has described the humanitarian situation in southern Bahr al-Ghazal state as one of "sheer desperation". A WFP spokeswoman who last week visited Majakaliet county told IRIN only 30 percent of some 25,000 people who came to the UN food distribution centre there could be fed. She described the scene as "all hell breaking loose" when the food distribution began, saying people had been "reduced to ripping each other apart" for food. "They have been reduced to choosing who lives and who dies," she added, pointing out that people trekked for four days just to receive a cup of maize and beans. A BBC report from the area commented that Khartoum's authorisation of a second plane to airlift food may have come too late to save tens of thousands of people possibly on the verge of a new famine.

SPLA denies offensive claim

The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has denied claims by Khartoum that it is planning a major offensive in southern and eastern Sudan. A Nairobi-based SPLA spokesman, George Garang, told IRIN today (Tuesday) the organisation was defending its positions in eastern Sudan which had come under attack from government troops for the last three years. Garang claimed "the Sudanese army is recruiting children" in preparation for war. He also warned the Sudanese government against restricting international aid flights to use as leverage against the SPLA. SPLA will push for more international aid flights during the 4 May peace talks in Nairobi, he added. Meanwhile Sudanese Defence Minister Lieutenant-General Ibrahim Sulayman said it was "mandatory to call up all young people" for military service to enable them to fight alongside the army, Sudanese television reported yesterday (Monday).

UGANDA: Museveni meets US, Sudanese delegations

President Yoweri Museveni held talks at the weekend with visiting US special envoy to the Great Lakes region Howard Wolpe, Ugandan radio reported. He also had a separate meeting with a Sudanese government delegation, led by former rebel Riak Machar who presides over the Southern Sudan Coordination Council. The radio gave no details of the talks.

"Final assault" against ADF rebels, Museveni says

The Ugandan army is mounting a "final assault" against rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) after they had been flushed out of their hideouts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Museveni told a parliamentary committee last week. According to the state-owned 'New Vision', the president said the DRC army had chased the rebels out of Congo and they "are now hiding on the Uganda side of the Ruwenzori mountains". "It will now be easy to deal with them in a final assault," Museveni said.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Banyamulenge soldiers sentenced to death for "mutiny"

Bukavu radio has announced the handing down of a number of death sentences following a court martial in the town. They include several Banyamulenge soldiers sentenced for involvement in an army mutiny earlier this year. A total of 27 Banyamulenge soldiers were on trial, 10 of whom were sentenced to five years imprisonment for "forming an informal group in Uvira", the radio said.

RWANDA: Former premier to appear before ICTR on genocide charges

Former Rwandan premier Jean Kambanda, the highest-ranking ex-political leader indicted for genocide, will make his first appearance before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) on Friday. According to an ICTR press release today, he will enter a plea in respect of the charges against him. Kambanda was arrested in Nairobi last July and transferred to the tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania. The ICTR press release also noted that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan will visit the tribunal on 5 May during his tour of Africa.

Former police chief arrested in Burkina Faso

Meanwhile another prominent genocide suspect, former military police chief and prefect of Butare Alphonse Nteziryayo, has been arrested in Burkina Faso and is awaiting extradition to Arusha. Nteziryayo, who was the commanding officer of the former government's military police, allegedly ordered the murder of surviving Tutsis in his prefecture. In Mali, two former Rwandan officers sought by the tribunal for genocide have been denied political asylum by UNHCR. Laurent Simpenzwe Serubuga is a former army chief of staff, while Francois Sibourama was believed to be a close friend of ex-president Juvenal Habyarimana, press reports said.

Rebels kill priest in Ruhengeri

Rebel militiamen in northern Rwanda killed a priest of Ruhengeri cathedral over the weekend, AFP reported, citing military sources. The priest, Bernard Kagabo, was killed in Kigombe commune and soldiers retaliated, but the attackers managed to flee. Five civilians were also killed by rebels in the same sector.

Rwandan exiles condemn executions

An exiled Rwandan opposition group, Forces de resistance pour la democratie (FRD), has condemned last week's execution of 22 genocide convicts. A statement signed by a leading member, Seth Sendashonga, accused the Rwandan authorities of "trivialising the annihilation of life". The statement claimed the executions "further seriously compromised prospects for establishing peace" and called for round-table talks with the government. The Rwandan government has said the executions served to demonstrate an end to impunity for the 1994 genocide and would deter rebels attempting to continue their insurgency in the country.

BURUNDI: Think tank says sanctions not working

A Brussels-based think tank has added its voice to calls for lifting regional sanctions against Burundi. According to AFP, the International Crisis Group, in a report entitled "Burundi Under Siege", said the embargo had made the poor poorer and the rich richer "by creating opportunities for

extortion rackets, corruption and highly-profitable black market economic activities". The sanctions had also played a part in "radicalising certain elements within the army and the minority Tutsi community by adding to their sense of persecution and vulnerability," the report added. The current regional peace process was seen as too partisan and had "evolved into a personal vendetta between the former Tanzanian president [mediator Julius Nyerere] and the president of Uganda on the one hand and [Burundi President] Buyoya on the other".

Foreign minister calls for team of neutral mediators

Burundi's Foreign Minister Luc Rukingama, interviewed in Nairobi on Friday, called for a "team of neutral mediators", representing different regions of Africa. Thus, Nyerere could represent east Africa with other representatives for other areas. On the transition, the minister said the authorities initially set a three-year time frame but with the imposition of sanctions this had proved unrealistic. He said the transition was being "rediscussed" with political partners and that "within a reasonable period" peace and stability would be restored leading to democracy.

Buyoya embarks on campaign to explain new policies

Azania news agency reported today that negotiations on the elaboration of a new transitional consitution could be completed this week. It said the talks were focusing on a "less explosive" power-sharing arrangement between minority Tutsis and majority Hutus. President Pierre Buyoya, who has embarked on a campaign to explain the new policies to Burundians, yesterday told a crowd in Bujumbura the people themselves would shape peace in the country and urged them to "move in the same direction". The president denied there were plans to integrate the rebel Conseil national pour la defense de la democratie (CNDD) into the army.

KENYA: Two said killed in fresh Rift Valley clashes

Two people were killed and several houses torched yesterday when clashes erupted in Njoro division of Rift Valley province, press reports said. The Nakuru-based coordinator of the Catholic Peace and Justice Committee (CPJC) Ernest Muremi told IRIN today the violence "is a resurgence of the January-February clashes" where politically-motivated and ethnic fighting left 127 people dead. Muremi said tension has been high in the area since January but heavy security presence had deterred attacks. He said a number of people had fled their homes and were camped out at Kianjoya shopping centre. Security forces have been sent to the area "but lack of political will" to solve the ethnic animosity may lead to "a full-scale inter-tribal clash", Muremi said.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Southern areas in darkness as militia control power plant

'Le Choc' weekly newspaper in Brazzaville today that the Moukoukoulou hydroelectric station in southern Congo is still held by Cocoyes militia allied to former president Pascal Lissouba. As a result, the city of Pointe-Noire and other areas of southwest Congo have been deprived of electricity for the past three weeks. A government delegation has been negotiating with the Cocoyes since 6 April, the newspaper reported. It added workers of the Societe Nationale d'Electricite were being held hostage at the power station.

GABON: Central African ministers meet to discuss security

Defence and interior ministers from 11 central African countries were due to open a meeting in Libreville today aimed at discussing judicial, police and military issues with regard to combating the illegal flow of weapons and drugs in the region. The talks are due to conclude with the creation of a body for preventing and containing conflicts. The countries represented include Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe and Chad.

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IRIN Update No. 408 for Central and Eastern Africa (Friday-Monday 1-4 May 1998)

SUDAN: Peace talks open in Nairobi

Peace talks between Sudan's SPLA rebels and the Khartoum government opened today (Monday) in Nairobi with both sides warning that not much will be achieved on a ceasefire. According to AFP, a top official of the ruling party has warned people not to "expect too much". Deputy Secretary-General Ali al-Haj Mohamed stressed that people " should not expect too much of this round of talks". He said the three days alloted for this negotiating round were "too short to be able to discuss all the problems on the agenda." Meanwhile, the BBC quoted rebel leader John Garang saying he would "press for more flight access" to southern Sudan, but also warning little progress on a cessation of hostilities was likely.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan today at a press conference at UN headquarters in Nairobi reiterated his "strong support" for the ongoing peace talks, held under the auspices of the regional IGADD grouping. Annan encouraged the two parties to "expedite their search for a comprehensive peaceful settlement of the conflict." He thanked the Khartoum government for increasing "threefold" the OLS relief flights into southern Sudan in the coming four months. He added that the major constraint now was the "question of resources". WFP has appealed to donors for a further $20.12 million in food and cash to meet the food needs in the next four months. UNICEF needs an additional $4.5 million to respond to non-food needs in Bahr al-Ghazal alone.

More areas affected in Southern Sudan

A "foreseeable crisis" is developing in other areas in Sudan due to weakened food economy and huge population displacements, SCF said on Saturday. Apart from Bahr al-Ghazal, the situation in West Upper Nile state and Ikotos in Eastern Equatorial state was described by SCF as "critical". About "200,000 people have been displaced in West Upper Nile and 30,000-40,000 have turned up in Bentiu town," SCF said.

BURUNDI: Prisoners freed due to overcrowding

Over 80 prisoners have been freed from Mpimba prison in Bujumbura due to overcrowding in the country's jails. According to the All Africa News Agency, they do not include inmates convicted of murder, embezzlement, armed robbery or financial corruption. Judicial sources say some 9,000 people are imprisoned in Burundi's jails which have a capacity of 3,650. Mpimba has 2,544 inmates in facilities meant to hold only 800 people. In addition to overcrowding, prison administrations are increasingly unable to feed inmates due to increased prices of agricultural produce, the agency reported.

RWANDA: ICTR convicts former prime minister of genocide

Handing down its first-ever verdict, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) on Friday convicted former Rwandan prime minister Jean Kambanda on six counts of genocide and crimes against humanity after he pleaded guilty to all charges. Sentencing will follow at a later date, yet to be announced. The plea could allow Kambanda to become a chief prosecution witness in other cases.

Deputy prosecutor Bernard Muna told a press conference that Kambanda would be prepared to testify in other cases before the UN court, the independent Hirondelle news agency reported. "He indicated that if he was asked to testify on the events that he knows about, he would not hesitate to do so," Muna said. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan described the plea and conviction as a "very important step".

Rwandan government hails guilty plea

The Rwandan government hailed the guilty plea, but said it was hardly surprising. "It is no surprise that Kambanda has pleaded guilty," Rwandan Foreign Affairs Minister Anastase Gasana told the Rwanda News Agency, RNA. He said Kambanda had been very well aware of the weight of evidence against him. "It would be very much appreciated if he reveals all he knows about the genocide plan, its organisation and how it was carried out throughout the country," Gasana added.

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council has agreed to expand the international tribunal judging the 1994 genocide in Rwanda in an effort to speed up the investigations. News reports said the council last Thursday unanimously adopted a resolution to establish a third trial chamber.

Newspaper says cholera hits southwest of country

A cholera epidemic has hit southwestern Rwanda where 219 cases have been recorded since March, a Rwandan newspaper reported on Friday. "An epidemic of cholera broke out in (the region of) Cyangugu in early March, the first cases being seasonal workers," AFP quoted the English-language 'New Times' as saying.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Olenghankoy re-arrested, says minister

DRC Interior Minister Gaetan Kakudji announced on state television on Friday that opposition politician Joseph Olenghankoy, who escaped in mid-April from a high-security prison at Buluwo, in Katanga, had been re-arrested. Olenghankoy was reportedly recaptured at Tenke village, around 80 km from Buluwo prison, by security forces and would now be held in Lubumbashi, the minister said. Olenghankoy, President of the FONUS (Forces novatrices pour l'union et la solidarite) party, escaped with two other prominent detainees who were recaptured and presented last week on television. DRC experts stress, however, that there has been no independent confirmation of his re-arrest.

Meanwhile, PANA news agency has reported that more than 10 journalists have been arrested since the arrival in power on 17 May of President Laurent-Desire Kabila. Quoting media sources in Kinshasa, the agency said in an article timed to coincide with yesterday's (Sunday's) World Press Freedom Day, the arrests took place for three reasons ranging from publishing articles hostile to the new regime, support to the opposition and what officials termed "empathising with the enemy". Punishment meted out to offenders has varied from a few hours of intensive interrogation to three months of detention at the "Penitentiary Reeducation Centre" located in the former Makala prison.

UGANDA: Museveni says some African conflicts are necessary

President Yoweri Museveni has said some of the conflicts in Africa become necessary and healthy when all other peaceful avenues fail. "Don't decry all violence. Some are good and others are bad. Bad ones are the unprincipled ones like tribalism, genocide and on religion," PANA news agency yesterday quoted Museveni as saying. Museveni was addressing a press conference in Kampala at the end of a two-day state visit by President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso. Museveni rejected the idea of an African military force saying it was too amorphous and would lack commitment. "Regional troops can do the work in areas of conflict. OAU gives blessing and the work is done by people who are near. They save on domestic demands because they can walk across the border," he said.

Rebels kill eight in Kasese

AFP reported the army saying on Thursday rebels have killed eight people during an attack in Uganda's western Kasese district. The rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) mutilated the body of one of the victims after killing him on Wednesday. A survivor, who was briefly detained by the rebels, told the independent 'Monitor' newspaper that she saw about 30 heavily-armed rebels who wore police and army uniform. A senior army commander, who asked not to be named, told AFP that the rebels had intended to ambush vehicles along the Bwera-Lake Katwe road, but changed their mind when they saw military trucks on patrol.

UNITED NATIONS: Annan calls on governments to cut arms expenditure

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has reiterated his call to African governments to drastically cut down on military expenditure in order to free up resources for development. Speaking at a press conference on Saturday at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Ethiopia, Annan suggested that military expenditure be reduced to no more than 1.5 percent a country's Gross Domestic Product.

The Secretary-General - who was in Ethiopia on the first leg of an 11-day tour of several eastern African countries - blamed poor governance for most conflicts in Africa, and urged that African societies should opt for paths that ensure respect for human rights - which he described as paramount to any development. "There are no African human rights. Human rights are universal and intrinsic in all humans

ANGOLA: Angola to receive World Bank support

Angola received five million dollars on Friday from the World Bank to fund social projects, according to the Angolan radio on Friday. The announcement was made by World Bank Southern African representative Barbara Kafka.

Nairobi, 4 May 1998 14:30 GMT

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Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

IRIN Update 411 for 7 May 98.5.7

UNITED NATIONS Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 411 for Central and Eastern Africa (Thursday 7 May 1998)

RWANDA/BURUNDI: Tough time predicted for Annan visit

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan arrived in Burundi today (Thursday), before leaving for Rwanda later in the day on what news reports described as the toughest leg of his eight-nation African tour. In Burundi, he will have talks with President Pierre Buyoya during which he said he will urge the authorities to "press ahead with the reconciliation process", AFP reported. A BBC report said this would be the "most delicate and difficult day" of his tour, as Rwandans widely blame the UN and Annan - who was head of UN peacekeeping operations in 1994 - for not preventing the genocide that year.

RWANDA: Genocide suspects confess, ask for pardon

Fifteen genocide suspects, held in Kigali central prison, have confessed to their involvement in the slaughter and asked for clemency, Rwandan radio reported yesterday (Wednesday). It noted that former premier Jean Kambanda had set an example by pleading guilty to genocide at the UN tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania.

BURUNDI: Mkapa acknowledges progress in peace process

Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa yesterday acknowledged "some progress has been made" in Burundi with the recent release of three prominent political detainees, AFP reported. He told reporters after meeting Kofi Annan the freeing of former presidents Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya and parliamentary speaker Leonce Ngendakumana was a "great step forward". Their release was a condition for lifting regional sanctions on Burundi.

Parliament speaker notes new partnership with government

National Assembly Speaker Leonce Ngendakumana has spoken of a "new partnership" between parliament and the government, Burundi radio reported. He told a news conference in Bujumbura yesterday discussions between the two institutions had focused on improving security and health in the country. The new partnership was aimed at providing a joint platform conducive to talks between all parties in the Burundi conflict.

SUDAN: Peace talks end with accord on self-determination

Peace talks between the Sudanese government and rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) ended in Nairobi yesterday with a pledge to hold a referendum on the right to self-determination in south Sudan. A statement read out by Kenyan Foreign Minister Bonaya Godana said the talks, under the auspices of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), had made progress despite a failure to reach agreement on state and religion. Kenyan radio said the parties also agreed on a "free and unimpeded" flow of humanitarian aid to affected parts of the country. They agreed to meet again in Addis Ababa in three months' time.

SPLA spokesman John Luk today told IRIN the talks could not be described as a failure as "limited progress" had been achieved. According to Luk, progress had been made on the issue of self-determination and an internationally-supervised referendum. Sudanese government negotiator Ali al-Haj Mohammad told a news conference in Nairobi today the "fundamental problem" had been solved. "Self-determination is actually the answer," he said, according to AFP.

WFP announces start of additional flights

WFP today announced the start-up of the first additional C-130 aircraft which began airdropping food supplies to 50,000 southern Sudanese in the towns of Ajak and Akon in Bahr al-Ghazal state. In a news release, WFP said the operation followed the Sudanese government's agreement last Sunday to let the UN use three additional C-130s, bringing the total number to five. WFP Southern Sector Coordinator David Fletcher described the planes as a lifeline for tens of thousands of Sudanese. Aid workers said the planes were arriving just in time.

UGANDA: 20,000 displaced as forces clash

About 20,000 people have been "internally displaced" in Bundibugyo, western Uganda, following clashes between the army and rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces, Ugandan army spokesman Shaban Bantaria told IRIN today. He said the displaced were living in "protected villages" guarded by the army. Shaban added that soldiers were moving into areas where the displaced had sought refuge to protect them from "raids and kidnappings" by fleeing ADF rebels. He stressed the army "lacked logistics" to feed or offer medical support to the displaced and appealed for government and NGO support.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Authorities urge return of former Mobutu officials

The DRC government has called on foreign countries, harbouring former officials of the Mobutu Sese Seko regime, to return them to Kinshasa. A statement read by Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha over DRC television last night said their lives would not be in danger and their contribution to national reconstruction was awaited. The statement described the "continued wandering" of former Mobutu officials as "humiliating" for the nation. The statement follows the threatened explusion from Cote d'Ivoire of four high-ranking former Zairean officials. UNHCR regional information officer in Cote d'Ivoire, Khassim Diagne, told IRIN today the Ivorian government at the request of UNHCR had "agreed to delay the expulsion order by 24 hours [until tomorrow] pending a review of the asylum request".

KENYA: Moi acknowledges serious financial problems

President Daniel arap Moi yesterday acknowledged Kenya was facing a financial crisis but said there was no quick solution, the 'Daily Nation' reported today. He told an economic consultative meeting the government had borrowed heavily to finance a budget deficit and blamed "weak public sector management" for the "failure to operate and maintain the existing public assets and services". "The adverse effects manifest themselves in the poor conditions of our infrastructure," he added. A seven-point rescue plan put forward by the government yesterday includes freezing pay rises for civil servants, renegotiating teachers' wage increases and a two-year suspension of new development projects, the 'Daily Nation' said.

ANGOLA: Security situation rapidly deteriorating

The security situation in Angola is said to be rapidly deteriorating with escalating clashes reported between the security forces and bandits - largely residual UNITA elements. A spokesman for the UN peacekeeping mission MONUA told IRIN today that in the provinces of Benguela, Malange, Huila and Uige "it's pretty serious" with villagers fleeing the violence. Angolan state TV on Tuesday described the military situation in the southern province of Benguela as "reaching war proportions". Humanitarian sources said fighting was continuing between the police and "supposed bandits" in four locations in the province. "UNITA claims they have nothing to do with these guys, but they are highly organised," one source noted.

The government has promised a crackdown over the insecurity. However, according to local analysts, the fear is that this could create a new guerrilla movement of "frustrated, demobilised soldiers" outside of UNITA's control.

ZAMBIA: Government agrees to enquire into torture allegations

The Zambian government says it has agreed to an impartial enquiry into allegations of torture against suspects accused of taking part in a failed coup attempt last year, the BBC reported on Wednesday. Home Affairs Minister Peter Machungwa said steps were also being taken to ensure law enforcement officers received human rights training. Earlier this year, Zambia's state-appointed human rights commission concluded that some of the 80 detainees accused in connection with last October's failed coup were tortured during interrogation.

Nairobi, 7 May 1998, 14:35 gmt

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IRIN Update No. 412 for Central and Eastern Africa (Friday 8 May 1998)

RWANDA: Annan greeted with hostility

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan received a hostile welcome during his visit to Rwanda yesterday (Thursday). The Rwanda News Agency said the "heart of the row" between Kigali and Annan was the Secretary-General's speech to the Rwandan national assembly. In his speech, Annan admitted that "in their greatest hour of need, the world failed the people Rwanda". "The world must deeply repent this failure," he added. He said he had come to Rwanda on a "mission of healing" and to pledge the UN's support. "Our commitment to your future begins with the pursuit of justice," Annan stressed. But Rwandan radio said the country's leaders described the speech as "insensitive, insulting and arrogant", and as such later boycotted a reception organised for Annan.

Gasana says responsibility must be apportioned

Addressing the national assembly ahead of Annan, Foreign Minister Anastase Gasana said Rwanda's complaints against the UN dated back to 1922 when the League of Nations placed the country under Belgian mandate. A series of masscres over the years "were carried out under the watchful eyes of the UN and its human rights organisations," the minister said. "How come all these were never a lesson to the UN?" Gasana dismissed comments by Annan that a lack of political will was to blame for failure to prevent the 1994 genocide, when Annan was head of the UN's peacekeeping operations. "Who was behind this lack of political will?", Gasana asked. "Responsibilities must be apportioned". He called for a commission of enquiry into the UN's role during the events of 1994 and for compensation for the country and especially the survivors.

Rwanda doesn't need UN, Bizimungu says

Annan today (Friday) met President Pasteur Bizimungu, Vice-President Paul Kagame and Prime Minister Celestin Rwigema. Speaking to journalists at the end of his visit, he said the mission "was not easy, but I was able to do all I planned to do". Earlier in the day he was heckled as he visited a genocide memorial site in Mulire, AFP reported. Bizimungu meanwhile said Rwanda did not necessarily need the "interference" of the UN. "The Rwandans are waiting for the assurance that the cycle of repetitive errors committed by the United Nations in Rwanda since 1920 will cease," he told a news conference, according to AFP.

ICTR detainees complain over treatment

Twenty detainees at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda have written to Annan to complain about the way their cases are being handled, Reuters reported. The letter, timed to coincide with Annan's visit to the tribunal in Arusha earlier this week, asked for fair treatment of Hutu refugees and rejected former premier Jean Kambanda's plea of guilty of genocide as "illegal".

BURUNDI: Buyoya urges UN to "uproot genocide"

Before arriving in Kigali, Annan paid a brief visit to Bujumbura the same day during which he met President Pierre Buyoya. The Burundi leader said Annan's visit was an indication the UN supported Burundians during this difficult period, Burundi radio reported. However he pointed out the country would find its own solution to its problems. He reiterated that regional sanctions should be lifted, saying they violated the human rights of Burundians. He urged the UN to "uproot genocide" in the region, saying certain groups were coming together to perpetuate massacres.

In an address to the Burundi national assembly, Annan said his visit demonstrated the UN's support for the peace process in Burundi. According to the radio, he added that Burundians would only find peace if they joined together and he called for respecting democratic principles and setting up a fair justice system. The UN would assist in strengthening the judicial system, he said.

Arusha peace process set to resume in June

A tentative date has been set for peace talks between Burundi's opposing sides in the Tanzanian town of Arusha, Reuters reported. Felix Mosha, an envoy of mediator, former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, said: "As things stand now, we are working on the basis of 15 June". Burundi's ambassador to Nairobi Stanislas Nakaha told IRIN the government was pleased that peace talks were resuming because it had appeared the Arusha process was dead. He said one of the points on the agenda would be to find a "neutral venue" for the continuation of peace negotiations. Interviewed by the All Africa News Agency recently, Burundi's Foreign Minister Luc Rukingama said the government would not go to Arusha for the sake of it. "We shall go to get something out of it," he said.

UGANDA: Regional refugee conference opens in Kampala

A two-day regional conference on refugee issues is due to open in Kampala today. It will be addressed by Kofi Annan and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata, who arrived in Kampala on Wednesday. Ugandan radio said Ogata yesterday urged African societies aspiring for prosperity to do so with regard to refugees, the vulnerable people in the region. She said refugees should be not be regarded as outcasts but as partners in development and cautioned governments against subjecting refugees to forced displacement. According to UNHCR, nine countries from the region will discuss practical measures that can be taken to ensure that refugee camps maintain their civilian nature and that all those seeking asylum are protected according to the 1969 OAU convention.

Government unaware of talks with rebels

The Ugandan government is "not aware" about alleged peace talks with the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Ugandan presidential press secretary Hope Kivengere told IRIN today. She was responding to a story in the Ugandan 'Crusader' newspaper which quoted an unnamed government official as saying "the talks have been set." Minister of State for Political Affairs Amama Mbabazi told IRIN last week that the government "may consider" holding peace talks with LRA, though it had not received a formal request.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Ex-Zairean officials granted asylum in Niger

Four former high-ranking officials of Mobutu Sese Seko's regime today left Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, for Niamey amid high security, following an

offer of asylum from Niger, press reports said. The four, who were about to be deported from Cote d'Ivoire, were yesterday granted an extra 24 hours to find a country willing to take them, after intervention by UNHCR.

KENYA: Army reportedly to be deployed in trouble spots

The Kenyan army is to be deployed in trouble spots throughout the country to quell cattle rustling and ethnic clashes, according to the 'Daily Nation' today. The announcement was made by President Daniel Arap Moi yesterday. The army, which will work alongside the Kenya police, has orders "to disarm" Pokot and Marakwet districts. President Moi, speaking in Nakuru today, denied press reports that the military would be involved in a security operation in the Njoro area where ethnic clashes earlier this year left 127 people dead.

Meanwhile about 18,000 people from Lelan and Kabeigo areas of Marakwet districts have been displaced into highland forests, while another 10,000 moved to neighbouring Keiyo district, Catholic Peace and Justice Commission (CPJC) spokesman Robert Kimiosop told IRIN today. According to Kimiosop, sending the army to disarm people was pointless because the Pokots "can acquire more guns" from Uganda and southern Sudan or bury them until the army leaves. He observed that the feud in the region may never end as cattle rustling is a "question of prestige and culture." The only solution is "education and eradication of poverty", he added.

TANZANIA: Dar es Salaam without water due to damaged pipeline

Tanzanian officials say the army has been drafted in to help repair a damaged pipeline that has left half of Dar es Salaam without water for four days, the BBC reported today. An official in the water ministry said the repairs were likely to take several days. The pipeline was damaged by recent torrential rain, and the official said old boreholes in the city were being recommissioned in an effort to increase water supplies. One of the city's major hospitals, the Muhimbili Medical Centre, was forced to suspend all but emergency operations yesterday as taps ran dry.

Nairobi, 8 May 1998, 15:10 gmt

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IRIN Update No. 416 for Central and Eastern Africa (Thursday 14 May 1998)

BURUNDI: CNDD changes due to faction-forming attempts, new leader says

The new leader of the rebel Conseil national pour la defense de la democratie (CNDD) Jean-Bosco Ndayikengurukiye has been speaking about the group's reorganisation. In an interview with the BBC's Kirundi service last night (Wednesday), he explained that the CNDD and its armed wing the Forces pour la defense de la democratie (FDD) were now grouped under the same leadership because there had been attempts by some of the movement's leaders to form factions. CNDD has sacked its former president Leonard Nyangoma, accusing him of trying to take too much power. Ndayikengurukiye said the group's political leaders had "not been close enough to the war front", and measures were therefore taken to stop further "disintegration". He denied morale in CNDD was low at a time when all-party peace talks are set to resume in Arusha next month. CNDD representatives would be at the talks, he added.

Rebels' strategy includes cutting off ears

Meanwhile a BBC correspondent who visited Burundi last week spoke to villagers who said Hutu rebels had punished them for "betrayal" by cutting off their ears. The villagers are Hutus, living in the hills around Bujumbura, whom the rebels accuse of not assisting them. In Isale, Bujumbura Rural province, a string of rebel attacks have brought fighting between insurgents and the army closer to the capital, the BBC report said. It added that several Hutu families were killed as they were sleeping when their houses came under rebel attack. Regional observers told IRIN today (Thursday) both PALIPEHUTU and FDD rebels are active in Bujumbura Rural. As in other parts of Burundi, the authorities are building new houses in Isale on sites close to the road which they say is for the peasant farmers' security. The BBC report says that by collecting villagers together, the move is also an attempt to deprive the rebels of local support.

In a recent dispatch, Reuters said the Isale area had been infiltrated by some 2,000 FDD rebels. It quoted Bujumbura Rural governor Stanislas Ntahobari as saying over 20,000 peasants had fled spontaneously, but local residents said the authorities had ordered people to evacuate their homes after a series of rebel attacks. According to Ntahobari, the rebels are cutting off people's ears "because the population doesn't listen anymore to what they are saying".

RWANDA: Youth on trial charged with using dogs to kill Tutsis

In Butare, southern Rwanda, a youth went on trial yesterday for allegedly using his dogs to kill Tutsis during the 1994 genocide, Rwandan radio reported. According to the state prosecutor, he was 15 years old at the time of the genocide. The verdict will be handed down on 25 May.

At least 36 priests guilty of genocide, rights group says

The human rights group, African Rights, has said at least 36 Roman Catholic priests are believed to have taken part in the genocide, AFP reported. In an open letter to Pope John Paul II, the group said most of the suspects were still serving the church and many had escaped to Italy, France or Belgium after the slaughter, where they were reportedly under the protection of the Vatican.

UGANDA: Third rebel ambush in a week in Gulu area

An unknown number of soldiers were killed and 14 others seriously injured on Monday in a rebel ambush in the northern Gulu area, civilian sources told AFP yesterday. The incident occurred at Lacaretot, 65 km northeast of Gulu town, and was third ambush in a week, carried out by rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army. On Saturday, rebels ambushed and destroyed a military vehicle along the Gulu-Kampala road and on Wednesday they killed 10 people in an ambush on the Lira-Kitgum road, AFP recalled. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has this week been visiting the Gulu area.

ZAMBIA: Paris Club pledges US $530 million

The Paris Club of international donors yesterday pledged about US $530 million in aid to Zambia in 1998, Reuters reported. The World Bank said the government may receive more assistance later this year if it speeded up privatisation and economic reforms, and that a second donors' meeting had been scheduled for before the end of 1998. The aid pledges comprise US $235 million in programme aid, essentially balance of payment support, and US $295 million in project support, the Bank said. That support is exclusive of ongoing debt relief worth more than US $120 million. Zambia had been seeking US $300 million in project aid and US $289 million in balance of payments support. The country also needs US $70 million for public service reform.

Alleging the government's continued human rights abuse, US-based Human Rights Watch on Monday called on the Paris Club to maintain the suspension of balance of payments support instituted by a number of donor countries in 1996 over Zambia's human rights record.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION: New boss pledges to tackle malaria

The new head of the World Health Organisation, former Norwegian premier Gro Harlem Brundtland, has said the fight against malaria will be one of WHO's top priorities. In her inaugural speech in Geneva yesterday, reported by the BBC, she said that because of international travel malaria posed a global threat. The BBC commented that her announcement may signal new hope for millions of people worldwide with extra funding for both research and health-promoting measures. The disease kills an estimated 3 million people a year.

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IRIN Update No. 417 for Central and Eastern Africa (Friday 15 May 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Regional summit postponed sine die

A statement from DRC Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha, issued today (Friday), announced abruptly the postponement of a 16-nation African summit in Kinshasa, UN sources told IRIN. The communique said the meeting was put back due to the "grave tension" between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Disputes in areas on the common border have led to tough statements from Addis Ababa and a call from Eritrea for demilitarised zones between the two countries. Djibouti President Hassan Gouled Aptidon today arrived in Addis Ababa to mediate, news agencies reported.

The Kinshasa Summit, on the theme of Great Lakes solidarity and development had been heading for a disappointing turnout, but South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim and two senior UN officials had already arrived. The presidents of Uganda and Rwanda were reported to have declined invitations to attend, while US diplomats were lukewarm on the meeting, which would have ended a day before the first anniversary of the victory of President Laurent-Desire Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) on 17 May. Amnesty International, in a report to mark the first anniversary of the new government, said it was "gravely concerned and disappointed" at the lack of progress in ending a culture of human rights abuses and impunity.

Foreign mining groups take fresh look at mineral wealth

Attracted by the DRC's staggering mineral wealth, foreign investors are taking a fresh look at the country's under-exploited mining industry. "They are looking for a place with potential, and the crucial thing is that the cost of production is very low compared with Latin America" (a rival copper-producing region), an analyst at the London-based 'Metal Bulletin' told IRIN. Katanga province produces 10 percent of the world's copper and 50 percent of the cobalt. "Although politically things are still very uncertain, it's seen as a risk worth taking," the analyst added. The South African firm Iscor is developing the Komoto copper project, an open pit mine with reserves estimated at 66 million mt. A spokesman for the company said negotiations with the government have been "difficult and extremely slow", but the DRC is seen as central to Iscor's long-term mining strategy. "From the mining viewpoint it is the prime mining country in the world," the spokesman said. "It is very high grade copper, shallow, abundant and cheap to mine."

Gold production is seen as another area with potential. On Wednesday, South Africa's Anglo-American and its subsidiary Anglogold announced a joint venture agreement for the exploration of the African interests of Canada's Barrick Gold. Those interests include the Kilo-Moto mine in northeast DRC. Anglogold and Barrick will each hold a 40 percent stake with the remaining 20 percent held by the government.

ANGOLA: South Africa vows to end illegal flights to UNITA

A visiting South African defence ministry envoy yestrday (Thursday) assured the Angolan government that Pretoria will take steps to prevent any violations of Angolan airspace by planes flying supplies to UNITA, AFP reported. General Si Paka said some illegal flights to UNITA renegades had been carried out by clandestine groups of South African and other unidentified nationals using airstrips in South Africa. He is in Luanda to discuss military cooperation between South Africa and Angola.

BURUNDI: Government delegation off to Tanzania to discuss Arusha meeting

A six-member Burundi delegation, led by Peace Process Minister Ambroise Niyonsaba, was due to leave Bujumbura today for weekend talks in Tanzania on the upcoming all-party meeting in Arusha next month. Niyonsaba told Reuters the delegation would meet mediator, former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere as well as President Benjamin Mkapa. He said one of the aims was to explain the new partnership between the Burundi government and the national assembly. The Arusha peace process is set to resume on 15 June, ahead of the dissolution of the current national assembly at the end of June. The authorities are trying to enact a package of reforms before parliament's term ends.

RWANDA: 17 killed by Interahamwe in Gitarama

Interahamwe militiamen massacred 17 people in the central Rwandan prefecture of Gitarama on Tuesday night, the Rwanda News Agency reported. It cited the governor of Gitarama, Desire Nyandwi, as saying that although security had improved in much of the prefecture "some acts of violence by the militias continue to claim the lives of innocent villagers". A special security meeting was convened in Gitarama yesterday, attended by Vice-President and Defence Minister Paul Kagame who stressed that security must be safeguarded through collaboration between local people, government officials and the security forces.

Rwanda "turned into a dustbin", Kagame says

Inaugurating a "solidarity camp" for students in Butare this week, Kagame deplored the fact that Rwanda "has been turned into a dustbin", RNA reported yesterday. He blamed "self-styled intellectuals" for the country's problems, accusing them of "inculcating the population with the ideology of hate". He also cricitised foreign media reports which claimed the Rwandan army was killing people in the northwest. He said Hutu militiamen in the northwest were encouraging the population to flee "foreign Tutsi forces", but villagers were now dissociating themselves from the "evil forces".

2,000 prisoners confess to genocide

Rwandan radio yesterday said about 2,000 inmates at a prison in Bugesera, Kigali-Rural prefecture, had admitted taking part in genocide and crimes against humanity. "Directeur de cabinet" in the justice ministry, Gerald Gahima, remarked that the confessions would facilitate genocide trials underway in the country, and urged the plaintiffs to reveal the whole truth.

SUDAN: FAO warning over serious food supply situation

In a special alert, issued today the FAO warns the food supply situation in several areas of south Sudan is giving cause for serious concern. Some 60 to 70 percent of the population in Eastern Equatoria, Bahr al-Ghazal, Lakes, parts of Jonglei state and the transition zones between south and north Sudan are currently in need of emergency food aid, FAO says. However, the situation is expected to improve following the government's decision to allow additional relief flights to the south. Prospects for 1998 will largely depend on rainfall over the next two months.

WFP today expressed concern that the relief operation could be hampered by heavy rains currently lashing south Sudan. Some 70 percent of dirt air-strips have been temporarily rendered unusable. Meanwhile, OLS told IRIN today about 400 mt of cereal seeds - almost half the target for distributing in time for the next season - have already been delivered to Bahr al-Ghazal. Another 300 mt of seeds are expected in the next three weeks.

UGANDA: Eight abducted from protected camp

Rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) abducted eight people from Awer protected camp in Gulu district on Monday night. Only one adult was among the group, according to Kenya's 'Daily Nation'. Protected villages, often guarded by the Ugandan army, are ostensibly created to protect civilians from rebels in Uganda's long-running northern conflicts. An ambush at Lacaretot, 65 km northeast of Gulu, left 14 soldiers seriously injured on the same day, reported AFP.

TANZANIA: 22 religious groups banned

The Tanzanian government has announced it is banning 22 Moslem and Christian religious groups, the BBC reported today. Their registration was being withdrawn with immediate effect. Home Minister Ali Ameir Mohammed had warned he would investigate fundamentalist religious groups and ban those found to be insulting other religions to save the country from bloodshed. His comments followed the death of three people at a mosque in Dar es Salaam during clashes between the police and Islamic militants.

Nairobi, 15 May 1998, 15:20 gmt

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Date: Fri, 15 May 1998 18:21:50 -0300 (GMT+3) Subject: Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Update 417 for 15 May 98.5.15

Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

IRIN Update 419 for 19 May 98.5.19

UNITED NATIONS Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 419 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 19 May 1998)

RWANDA: 11 children killed by presumed Interahamwe militiamen

At least 11 children were killed and three wounded in a night attack on their boarding school in northwest Gisenyi prefecture, AFP reported, quoting hospital sources. The attack occurred overnight Sunday at Nyamyumba school in Kivumu. A hospital official said some of the victims received serious bullet wounds. The children were aged between 11 and 17. According to a BBC report, suspected Interahamwe militiamen were behind the attack.

Ibuka urges mass trials for those who admit genocide

The genocide survivors' organisation, Ibuka, has called for mass trials for those who confess to crimes of genocide, Rwandan radio reported. At a meeting in Kigali, Ibuka also called for a revision of the way the public prosecutor's office works. It criticised the release of genocide suspects on the grounds the government had insufficient resources, the radio said.

Number of genocide deaths higher than estimated

A commission set up by the education ministry says the number of people killed in the 1994 genocide is higher than originally estimated, the All Africa News Agency reported today (Tuesday), citing the latest issue of the Rwandan 'Liberation' newspaper. Estimates have varied between 500,000 and one million, but the commission's report puts the figure at 1,364,000. The commission's survey was conducted on a commune by commune basis and the report is the first based on "research", according to the newspaper.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: South Africa offers development experts to DRC

South Africa's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki has pledged to send South African experts to the DRC to assist in financial, infrastructural and human resource development, the 'Sunday Independent' reported. Mbeki made the announcement after meeting President Laurent-Desire Kabila for three hours on Friday after the abrupt cancellation of a regional summit. Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad said Mbeki urged Kabila to cooperate with the international community and temper his stance on human rights issues. "We must work to stabilise Congo, not only for our own growing economic links. If it explodes it will affect nine other countries on its borders and we will all lose," Pahad said. The South African development experts are due to arrive in Kinshasa within two weeks.

BURUNDI: Speaker briefs Nyerere on internal peace process

Parliament Speaker Leonce Ngendakumana, who met Burundi mediator Julius Nyerere in Dar es Salaam on Sunday, said he briefed the former Tanzanian president on the new partnership between the Burundi government and national assembly, ahead of all-party peace talks due to resume in Arusha on 15 June. According to Burundi radio, he told Nyerere the new understanding between the two institutions erased some of the conflict between them. Nyerere reportedly told Ngendakumana he was in favour of Burundi's internal peace dialogue, which complemented the external peace process he was mediating.

FROLINA says military campaign continuing

The rebel Front pour la liberation nationale (FROLINA) says it is pursuing the military campaign it relaunched last November. Spokesman Venerand Ndegeya told IRIN today the organisation's armed forces "are in the field" and claimed the international media were misrepresenting events on the battlefield. He said FROLINA was elaborating a military plan "which will enable our forces to protect more adequately the unarmed civilians", as well as a flow of information "so that responsibility for each action is claimed by our own troops and not by some other groups, which so far has been the case most of the time".

ETHIOPIA/ERITREA: OAU warns of regional instability if conflict worsens

The OAU has offered to mediate in the growing border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia, warning that the conflict could destabilise the whole region. "I am concerned that this unfortunate crisis, if allowed to escalate, will have serious consquences for the two countries," OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim said yesterday (Monday), according to PANA news agency. "It could also destabilise the region." He urged the two countries to resolve their differences peacefully, amid reports that both sides were massing troops in the disputed border area. Djibouti President Hassan Gouled Aptidon on behalf of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and US deputy Secretary of State for Africa Susan Rice are currently shuttling between the two countries, although the Ethiopian government yesterday said it would not countenance mediation until Eritrea withdrew its troops. According to AFP, Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame has arrived in Addis Ababa.

EAST AFRICA: Regional integration inches closer

The East African countries of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda on Friday took a closer step towards regional integration with the announcement of a joint legislative assembly, supreme court and monetary union, PANA news agency reported. In a statement released in Nairobi, the three East African Cooperation members announced they would also establish a common market and promote regional trade by removing outdated tariffs. Meanwhile joint military exercises involving the three countries and US troops are set to take place in Kenya's Turkana district between 17-26 June, Kenyan radio said. The focus of the exercises will be "disaster management".

KENYA: Hundreds homeless after Lake Victoria bursts it banks

Lake Victoria has burst its banks for the first time in 36 years, leaving hundreds of people homeless, the 'Daily Nation' reported today. The overflowing lake, caused by abnormal rainfall in western Kenya, has also destroyed hundreds of hectares of crops in Nyanza province. The 'Daily Nation' said a disaster relief committee has gone to affected areas.

UN inquiry team into illegal arms sales arrives in Nairobi

Members of the relaunched UN International Commission of Inquiry into illegal arms sales to Rwanda have arrived in Nairobi, according to a UN spokesman. He said the four-member commission, led by Mahmoud Kassem of Egypt, would collect information and investigate reports related to the sale, supply and shipment of arms to the former Rwandan government and militias. They would also identify parties involved in illegal arms sales and make recommendations aimed at preventing the illegal flow of weapons in the Great Lakes region.

UGANDA: 30 rebels said killed by army

The Ugandan army says it has killed 30 rebels from Allied Democratic Forces in the western Bundibugyo district and destroyed several rebel training camps, the state-owned 'Sunday Vision' reported. Colonel Charles Angina, the second division commanding officer, said the operations took place at the end of last week between Kabango, Bumate and Kakuka areas. He said the army managed to thwart the rebels' attempts to begin training captives. Angina added that ADF conditions in their Ruwenzori mountain hideouts were "very precarious and inhuman".

Museveni meets Congolese counterpart

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and his visiting Congolese counterpart Denis Sassou Nguesso yesterday issued a communique calling for greater efforts towards peace and security in the Great Lakes region. They also urged closer regional consultations, according to Ugandan radio. The two leaders stressed the need to strengthen African economic integration and as such agreed to boost cooperation between their two countries. Museveni hailed Sassou Nguesso's efforts in bringing about national reconciliation in Congo, the radio added. During talks on Sunday, Museveni told his guest he had always been opposed to dividing Africa into anglophone and francophone groups, and he was happy to note these divisions were now breaking down.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Troops battle Cocoyes militia in south

Government forces on 10 May reportedly launched a military offensive against Cocoyes militia allied to former president Pascal Lissouba in the Mouyondzi area of southern Congo, according to the latest edition of 'La Semaine Africaine' weekly newspaper. The start of the offensive followed failed attempts to negotiate a peaceful resolution to the six week-old Mouyondzi crisis, the newspaper said.

'La Semaine Africaine' also reported that Cobra militiamen who supported Denis Sassou-Nguesso during the 1997 civil war and have since been integrated into the national army are largely undisciplined and "have a taste for rape, looting and extortion". The despatch of former Cobras to the Pool and Niari regions has resulted in many residents from those areas leaving their villages and sleeping in the forests, it added.

Nairobi, 19 May 1998, 14:15 gmt

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IRIN Update 421 for 21 May 98.5.21

U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 421 for Central and Eastern Africa (Thursday 21 May 1998)

BURUNDI: All sides agree to Arusha talks, Nyerere says

Burundi peace mediator, former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, yesterday (Wednesday) announced that all sides in the conflict had agreed to meet in Arusha on 15 June. His announcement followed talks in Dar es Salaam with Burundian President Pierre Buyoya, coming in the wake of a series of meetings with various Burundi political leaders. He told a news conference there should be a cessation of hostilities in Burundi before the start of the talks, AFP reported. On his arrival back in Bujumbura, Buyoya said he had insisted that the Arusha meeting re-examine the issue of regional economic sanctions and relations between Burundi and Tanzania, according to AFP. Earlier, Buyoya sought to reassure Burundians that his meeting in Dar es Salaam was part of the ongoing peace process. An internal peace dialogue is running parallel to the regional initiative.

Human rights group concerned over prison conditions

The Burundi human rights organisation Iteka has expressed concern over conditions in Burundi's prisons. In a statement, it said the death toll in the jails had reached alarming proportions. The situation was aggravated by shortages of food and medicine, due partly to the embargo on the country. Iteka, whose representatives frequently visit prisons and detention centres in Burundi, said 10 percent of the population in Muyinga prison had died between 1 January and 22 April 1998. Over the same period, in Ngozi prison, 229 out of 2,400 prisoners had died. If the trend continued, 30 percent of inmates in this prison would have died by the end of the year, Iteka warned. It urged the authorities to exercise more control over those responsible for detentions and called on national and international institutions to help improve prison conditions and the judicial system.

WFP resumes food airlifts

WFP yesterday began airlifting 3,000 mt of food commodities to maintain its food security programmes in Burundi. OCHA-Burundi notes the airlift follows a first such endeavour undertaken in March when nearly 700 mt of urgently needed feeding materials were flown to Burundi. The airlifts became necessary when normal rail and road transport routes were damaged as a result of heavy rains in Tanzania.

KENYA: Three arrested in connection with Sendashonga murder

Three people have been arrested in connection with the murder of Rwandan opposition politician and former interior minister Seth Sedashonga in Nairobi on Saturday. Kenyan police told a news conference yesterday they included two Rwandans and a Ugandan. The murder was reportedly a revenge killing for an alleged financial swindle, but Sendashonga's family still maintain the Rwandan authorities are behind his death.

RWANDA: More prisoners admit genocide

Over 200 more Rwandan prisoners confessed to genocide crimes yesterday in the hope of having their sentences reduced, Radio Rwanda reported. Their confessions follow those of 2,000 prisoners last week. Foreign Minister Anastase Gasana welcomed the confessions, saying the recent executions of 22 genocide convicts appeared to have had some effect. "This is a good thing and one of the positive repercussions of the government's decision to carry out the [death] sentence," he told a news conference.

HRFOR should revise its operation, Gasana says

Gasana also said the UN Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda (HFROR) should "revise its methods of operation", Rwandan radio reported today. He urged it to "assist efficiently in enforcing human rights in Rwanda by mobilising Rwandans in the field of human rights". Discussions on HRFOR's new mandate were still underway, he added.

Genocide suspect transferred to Arusha

A former governor of Butare prefect, Alphonse Nteziryayo, has been transferred to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha to face genocide charges, the independent Hirondelle news agency reported. Nteziryayo, who is also a former police chief, was arrested in Burkina Faso last month and extradited to the court.

Cholera epidemic discussed

Representatives from Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo met in the southwest Rwandan town of Cyangugu earlier this month to discuss an outbreak of cholera in the three countries. According to a WHO report from the meeting, they agreed to coordinate activities to combat the disease, which this year so far has left 44 people dead in the South Kivu region of DRC.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Bleak situation in Sankuru region

A recent mission led by CRS and Memisa in Sankuru, in northern Kasai Oriental, reveals a bleak sanitary, health and infrastructure situation. A CRS spokesperson told IRIN today it was a "desperate situation, especially considering that preventable diseases are spreading". A mission report indicates that Sankuru region suffers from several endemic diseases such as TB, trypanosomiasis (Sleeping sickness), onchocerciasis (River blindness), leprosy and iodine defficiency, and experienced epidemics of monkey-pox this year and polio in 1996. Health structures are very poor as medical centres have no equipment and very little medicines, while health officers have not been paid for more than two years and work part-time in their fields. In addition the mission found there was no running water, and an estimated 90 percent of water sources are contaminated. CRS is currently preparing a programme to respond to the Sankuru situation. An estimated one million people live in the region.

Weapons cache discovered in major Kinshasa hotel

DRC radio last night reported that a cache of weapons was discovered in Kinshasa in the room of the Memling hotel's technical director - a Belgian who is currently away on holiday. As a result, the hotel's director Cornelius Bik who is Dutch, was arrested by the security services but was later released after questioning. A security official told the radio that the Belgian, Freddy Salverius, "was in touch with our enemies, members of the deposed regime". Relations between DRC and the former colonial power Belgium are already tense, following the seizure of weapons at the Belgian

consulate in Lubumbashi earlier this year.

Rebels kill 30 at Goma checkpoint

Humanitarian sources told IRIN today some 30 people were killed at a checkpoint near Goma on Saturday night. Information is sketchy, but the attack was reportedly carried out by a group of rebels. A Belgian national is reportedly among the dead.

UGANDA: 42 Sudanese POWs freed

The Ugandan authorities have freed 42 Sudanese POWs in a "goodwill gesture", the state-owned 'New Vision' daily reported. The Sudanese soldiers are part of a group of 114 who were captured over a year ago in the northern Kitgum area. A senior army officer, quoted by the newspaper, said Uganda was now awaiting the return of two Ugandan soldiers held in Sudan and abducted Ugandan schoolgirls. However, a statement issued by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army today, reported by 'New Vision', said plans to free the girls had been put on hold. The LRA claimed the army was planning to attack the rebels during the handover, saying 5,000 troops had been sent to the handover area.

In another report, the daily said fresh incursions by Lord's Resistance Army rebels into the northern Lira district had displaced 10,000 people since last Friday. Over 50 people have reportedly been kidnapped and property looted.

Rail links with Kenya severed

Rail communication between Uganda and Kenya has been severed following heavy landslides and floods on the Kenyan side which have damaged bridges, the 'New Vision' reported yesterday. The worst damaged, according to a Kenya Railways official, was between Naivasha and Nairobi in the Rift Valley. A Ugandan railways official expressed concern over the situation, noting that 60 percent of Uganda's imports came by rail. The situation was exacerbated by ongoing repairs on the rail link with Tanzania.

Moi, Museveni discuss economic integration

Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi, who is on a visit to Uganda, met President Yoweri Museveni for talks on East African economic integration. According to Ugandan radio, Moi said economic growth in Uganda "essentially means economic growth in Kenya". "Kenya cannot be taken in isolation of its neighbours, Uganda and Tanzania," Moi was quoted as saying.

Nairobi, 21 May 1998, 15:00 gmt

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UNITED NATIONS Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 422 for Central and Eastern Africa (Friday 22 May 1998)

RWANDA: Thousands of "collaborators" return from hiding

Over 4,000 people have returned home to Gisenyi prefecture from the Virunga mountains where they were "collaborating with infiltrators to destabilise peace and security", Radio Rwanda reported yesterday (Thursday). The report stated that a temporary camp had been established in Rwerere commune for those who are "disassociating" themselves from rebel "infiltrators". The Rwanda News Agency, quoting officials in Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, reported yesterday that as many as 50,000 people may have returned to the northwestern regions over the last month.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Troops, rebels clash near Goma

More details have emerged over an incident near Goma earlier this week in which some 30 people were killed. AFP quoted diplomatic sources in Kinshasa as saying a gunfight broke out between government troops and unidentified rebels last weekend on the Butembo-Goma road. The Belgian embassy in Kigali confirmed a 24 year-old Belgian national was among the dead. He had reportedly been on a visit to Goma from Kampala.

AZADHO warns of "human rights disaster"

The banned human rights organisation AZADHO is "very concerned" about the sentences handed down by a military court to three opponents of the Kinshasa regime. In an interview with French radio, Guillaume Ngafa, AZADHO chairman, said that the use of military courts was a "perfect instrument of repression and death". One of the three, Arthur Z'ahidi Ngoma, a UNESCO employee in poor health, was given a 12-month suspended sentence and is now free to leave the country if he wishes, according to state TV yesterday.

NGO registration process announced

The Congolese official news agency ACP reported yesterday that NGOs will be "rigorously checked" during a registration process that is to begin immediately. The announcement was made by a vice minister in the interior ministry, Mulumba Katchy, on Wednesday.

SUDAN: UK consortium launches appeal

Twelve members of the UK-based NGO group Disasters Emergency Committee launched an appeal for Sudan yesterday. The document quotes Oxfam's David Bryer saying "humanitarian aid can make a difference, but we can't make the crisis go away. A long term solution will only come with peace."

"Devastation" in Twic county, Bahr al-Ghazal

Armed militia allied to the Khartoum government, have killed an unknown number of civilians and burnt villages and markets in a series of raids starting on 4 May in Bahr al-Ghazal. A spokesman for Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) told IRIN today that several villages in Twic county, northeast of Gogrial were "devastated" by the "punitive" attacks. Up to a thousand men, travelling on horseback, were involved in the attacks NPA, said.

UGANDA: Displacements due to attacks, flooding

Humanitarian sources confirm thousands of people have been displaced after a rebel attack on the northern Lira area last Saturday. Some 7,000-8,000 people are sheltering in schools where they are being registered by the local authorities. Meanwhile the local government in the eastern Moroto area says 743 people have been displaced due to flooding. Homes and much of the recently-planted sorghum and finger millet crops have been destroyed. WFP says it is providing an initial one month's supply of food through NGOs and parishes, but urges agencies to visit the area and provide further assistance.

ANGOLA: UN staff attacked, one killed

The UN Secretary-General's spokesman has announced that a UN interpreter was killed in an attack in Malange province on Tuesday, and a military staff officer and a civilian police officer were wounded. The spokesman told reporters in New York that the Security Council was told yesterday that "no significant progress had been made in concluding the remaining provisions of the Lusaka Protocol." The 1994 Lusaka protocol is the peace framework agreed between the Angolan government and UNITA.

RWANDA: Charges against Alphonse Nteziryayo

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) announced yesterday that Alphonse Nteziryayo, former commanding officer of the military police and later prefect of Butare is jointly charged with Sylvain Nsabimana, the previous prefect of Butare, who has already pleaded not guilty to five counts. Nteziryayo, facing six counts, is charged with ordering and participating in "the killing of all surviving Tutsis in the prefecture of Butare." He was transferred to Arusha from Burkina Faso earlier this week. The ICTR now has 24 accused persons in its custody.

Sendashonga killing still in dispute despite arrests

While repeating denials of official involvement, a Rwandan government spokesman, Wilson Rutayisire, told Reuters yesterday he did not believe the Kenyan police's version of events. The Kenyan police say one of the three people arrested for the murder has confessed, saying Sendashonga and the suspect's father had fallen out over an illict financial transaction.

UGANDA-SUDAN: Uganda released Sudanese POWs unconditionally - Museveni

President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda yesterday told reporters Uganda's release of 42 Sudanese prisoners of war was "unconditional". Uganda still holds 72 other Sudanese POWs. An ICRC spokesman today (Friday) confirmed to IRIN reports that the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) was due to release more than 20 Ugandan schoolgirls but that the plan was put back. Uganda accuses Khartoum of supporting the LRA. Museveni told

a news conference that the LRA "need to be defeated by force," reports PANA.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Cocoyes militia leaves Moukoukoulou dam

The Government and rebellious Cocoyes militia signed an agreement on 14 May ending the crisis in the Mouyondzi area of southern Congo, La Semaine Africaine weekly newspaper reported on 21 May. At a symbolic peace ceremony held in Mouyondzi on 16 May, the insurgents handed over their weapons to government negotiators, led by President Denis Sassou-Nguesso's cabinet director, Isidore Mvouba, and the minister of transport and civil aviation, Martin Mberi, the newspaper reported. As a result of the agreement, Cocoyes militia left the Moukoukoulou hydroelectric dam, which they had been occupying since the start of the hostilities in early April, according to the newspaper. It added that under the agreement, undisciplined Cobra militiamen posted in the Bouenza region will be replaced by members of the national police. Last week, La Semaine Africaine reported that the government had launched an offensive against the Cocoyes insurgents in Bouenza.

Nairobi, 22 May 1998, 14:50 gmt

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IRIN Update 424 for 26 May 98.5.26

UNITED NATIONS Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 424 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 26 May 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Six ministers arrested or questioned

Six DRC ministers are "behind bars or about to be", according to the DRC daily 'La Reference Plus' today (Tuesday). It says Information Minister Raphael Ghenda, Minister without Portfolio Kambale Mututulo and International Cooperation Minister Celestin Lwangi are under arrest, while Energy Minister Pierre Lokombe, Planning Minister Etienne Mbaya and Industry Minister Babi Mbayi are reportedly undergoing interrogation. No official explanation has been given, but 'La Reference Plus' says the arrests of Ghenda and Lwangi could be linked to the airing of the film 'Never Again' which depicts atrocities allegedly committed during the liberation war. 'Le Potentiel' said the president's "directeur de cabinet" Yerodia Ndombasi was also questioned in connection with the film, but he was reportedly released later.

According to 'Le Potentiel', video footage shows soldiers of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) standing next to the bodies of "presumed Rwandan Hutu refugees". The newspaper said the film was authorised to be aired on national television by a committee charged with organising the Kinshasa regional summit earlier this month which later failed to take place. The committee included Yerodia Ndombasi and Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha, 'Le Potentiel' said. "Their aim was to show that the current authorities in Kinshasa never again wanted to see such acts of barbarism in the Democratic Republic of Congo," it wrote.

Transitional constituent assembly established

The authorities have established a transitional constituent assembly to draw up a draft constitution for the DRC. According to a BBC report, the assembly was created by presidential decree and will have legislative powers. It specifically excludes anyone who held public office during the regime of former president Mobutu Sese Seko. The BBC said this would bar remaining opponents of President Laurent-Desire Kabila such as veteran opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi.

UGANDA: Rebels refuse to link schoolgirl releases to freeing of Sudanese POWs

Lord's Resistance Army rebels have rejected demands by President Yoweri Museveni free 21 schoolgirls abducted from Uganda's northern Lira district in 1995. According to the state-owned 'New Vision' yesterday (Monday), an LRA press release said any attempt to rescue the girls by force would result in their death. Uganda last week released 42 of 114 Sudanese prisoners "as a goodwill gesture". The LRA press release said the rebels would free the girls "at the right time".

Army confirms major LRA offensive in north

Ugandan army chief-of-staff Brigadier James Kazini has confirmed a major LRA rebel incursion into northern Uganda, led by Joseph Kony from his base in south Sudan. Kazini told AFP yesterday some 23 rebels were killed in a gunbattle with the army on Friday in Gulu district. He said he believed large numbers of rebels had crossed over from Sudan because they feared they were likely to lose Khartoum's support. "Now we are normalising relations with Sudan, I think Kony suspects that they might change their attitude towards him," Kazini said. According to the 'New Vision', Major General Salim Saleh who is in charge of the defence ministry, went to Gulu yesterday after hearing that Kony was in Atiak, northeast of Gulu town.

Interahamwe attack Ugandan villages

The 'New Vision' also reported that Rwandan Interahamwe militiamen attacked villages in Kisoro county, southwest Uganda, last Thursday looting and destroying property. Local officials said the rebels threatened residents, sending them fleeing in panic. Four unarmed Interahamwe members were arrested by Mganinga Park wardens and are being interrogated. According to a local official, the attackers "are not killers, they are after property".

Meanwhile, an officer of the Rwandan Patriotic Army told AFP that Uganda, Rwanda and DRC were exchanging information regarding the movement of Interahamwe militiamen through the three countries. He said the information exchange did not amount to a joint military operation.

RWANDA: Army launches major offensive against rebels in northwest

The Rwandan army has killed seven Interahamwe militiamen in a major sweep in the northwest, a military source said, according to AFP. The incident occurred on Saturday in Ngilu, near the town of Ruhengeri. The source said the RPA had been waging a "fairly large campaign after a mass return of civilians who had followed the militiamen to the volcano district". He said such returnees often provided the army with details of the militiamen's hideouts. Rwandan radio on Thursday reported over 4,000 people had returned home from the Virunga mountains where they were "collaborating with infiltrators to destabilise peace and security". The Rwanda News Agency, quoting officials in Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, also reported on Thursday that as many as 50,000 people may have returned to the northwestern regions over the last month.

BURUNDI: Nyerere threatens to quit as mediator if Buyoya not recognised

Burundi peace mediator Julius Nyerere has threatened to resign if the conflicting sides refuse to recognise the authority of President Pierre Buyoya, the Tanzanian 'Guardian' daily reported. "Major Buyoya may be an illegitimate president but the fact remains that he is the current president in power," Nyerere was quoted as saying. "If they say they don't recognise him, it will be foolishness. I will then pack my things and call it quits as I would have no work left to do." He said "recognition of Major Buyoya's influence" was a precondition for the Burundi peace talks which are due to resume in Arusha on 15 June, the newspaper reported.

SUDAN: Rebels atttack government militia near Ethiopian border

A statement issued by the opposition Voice of Sudan radio said forces of the National Democratic Alliance had "inflicted heavy loss of life" in an attack on Sudanese government militias based at Khatir on the border with Ethiopia. According to the radio, monitored by the BBC, the attack occurred on Sunday morning, after an earlier offensive on the same camp last month. A number of weapons were also captured. The NDA appealed to citizens to "keep away from the military operational areas to safeguard their lives and property".

TANZANIA: OCHA urges funds for flood victims

OCHA-Geneva has appealed for funds to assist flood victims in the Dar es Salaam area. It says several days of uninterrupted, torrential rain earlier this month has submerged hundreds of homes, washed away streets and destroyed bridges, cutting off several suburbs of the city.. About 4,600 people have been made homeless, mostly in the Kinondoni, Dala and Temeke districts. They have been temporarily sheltered in public buildings and have been receiving food and medicine, but funds are required for building new homes as well as addressing the victims' immediate needs.

Nairobi, 26 May 1998, 15:00 gmt

[ENDS]

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Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

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UNITED NATIONS Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 425 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 27 May 1998)

RWANDA: Government resettling villagers in northwest

Government officials have begun resettling thousands of villagers displaced by war in northwest Rwanda, the Rwanda News Agency (RNA) reported. It quoted Rwandan radio as saying food items and farming implements were distributed to about 20,000 internally displaced residents in Ruhengeri prefecture. On Monday, local officials launched a campaign urging residents to maintain security in their communes. Yesterday, some 30,000 people from the prefecture gathered at Kigombe soccer stadium to take part in festivities aimed at depicting the negative effects of war, RNA said. Interior Minister Abdul Kharim Harelimana urged residents to desist from supporting insurgents and to denounce anyone collaborating with them. "Let this week be a week of restoring security in Ruhengeri," he said.

WFP to provide food aid to northwest

In its latest weekly report, WFP said it had carried out initial assessments after the government requested food assistance for 95,230 displaced people in Ruhengeri and Gisenyi prefectures. WFP pointed out no international organisations were fully operational in the prefectures which made detailed assessment difficult. The food agency plans to deliver 1,220 mt of food aid to the displaced people over a period of one month.

Rebels using children, radio says

According to Rwandan radio on Monday, rebels in northwest Rwanda are using children in their war against the government. It said 60 children abducted by militiamen had turned themselves in to the army in Nyamutera commune, north of Kigali. The children had reportedly been used by the rebels to spread anti-government pamphlets and spy on the army.

UGANDA: LRA rebels trapped on two fronts

Rebels from the Lord's Resistance Army are reportedly trapped on two fronts by Ugandan troops, the 'New Vision' reported today (Wednesday). It cited security sources as saying Ugandan forces counter-attacked on two fronts in the northern Lira district, surrounding the rebels in the Apala and Olilim areas. A third group of rebels managed to cross to Kitgum through Adwari sub-county, the newspaper reported. The trapped rebels are believed to be led by the LRA second-in-command Vincent Otti Lagony.

The WFP weekly report noted northern Uganda is seriously affected by insecurity. WFP is providing food assistance to some 7,000 people displaced in Lira. Rebels also raided three displaced people's camps in Gulu and abducted several people. Military operations along the Kitgum-Lira road, following a number of ambushes, means traffic is being diverted along other routes.

Museveni to respond to DRC allegations

President Yoweri Museveni will respond to allegations of interference by the Democratic Republic of Congo, the 'New Vision' reported. The president's press secretary Hope Kivengere said the government would not engage in a press war over the issue which would be tackled at presidential level. "The president will not bend low to fight a press war," she said. DRC's Economy Minister Victor Mpoyo on Friday also accused Museveni of "denigrating" President Laurent-Desire Kabila.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Kalehe region reportedly unstable

The security situation in the Kalehe area of South Kivu is going "from bad to worse", according to a report in 'La Reference Plus' yesterday. It said the civilian population had become the "favourite targets" of the military. The newspaper claimed the local people had become caught up in fighting between Banyamulenge soldiers and Rwandan Interahamwe militiamen. Agricultural activity had been abandoned as people migrated towards urban centres, the paper added.

SUDAN: WFP revises number needing food aid

WFP has revised upwards the target number of people for food assistance in Bahr al-Ghazal state. It announced it would feed some 595,000 people, 380,000 of whom are in critical need of food aid for survival. WFP says the number of people requiring emergency food relief has increased from six weeks ago. The total number of people requiring food aid throughout south Sudan has also been revised upwards from 700,000 to 930,000. Eastern Equatoria and Wester Upper Nile are giving increasing cause for concern, WFP says in a news brief on Sudan.

Oil revenue to be used for southern development - Bashir

President Omar al-Bashir has said the income from Sudanese oil exports will be used for development, particularly reconstruction in the south, Sudanese radio reported yesterday. He was speaking at the inauguration a new pipeline in the Jayli area. He also laid a foundation stone at the Khartoum oil refinery. "Self-sufficiency and export" would begin early next year, Bashir said. According to the radio, once completed, the pipeline - stretching 1,160 km - will be the longest in Africa.

NDA meets in Cairo to discuss how to topple Bashir

Sudan's opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has begun a round of talks in the Egyptian capital Cairo to examine ways of launching an "intifada" against the Khartoum government, AFP reported. It quoted NDA spokesman Faruq Abu Issa who said the intifada was the main topic on the agenda. The NDA groups northern opponents to the government and southern rebels. Issa said the "unprecedented" talks were a "step forward for the opposition's struggle against the government to overthrow it". AFP noted the meeting is the first outside the Eritrean capital Asmara, where the NDA has its headquarters.

BURUNDI: 500 arrested in security sweep

Over 500 people were arrested in Bujumbura today in a security sweep against rebels and illegal immigrants, according to AFP. Police sources said

they conducted a raid in the central market area of the city, searching for Burundi rebels as well as Rwandans and Congolese who were in the country illegally. Rumours were circulating last week that ex-FAR, ex-FAZ and Burundi rebels had arrived in Bujumbura, AFP reported.

Government requests return of seeds from SADC seed bank

Burundi has requested the return of the food seed reserves it entrusted for storage at the Lusaka-based Southern African Development Community (SADC) seed bank, PANA news agency reported. An official at the SADC genetic resources centre said yesterday the request was prompted by food shortages generated by the ongoing civil conflict in Burundi. According to the official, the shipment of foodstuff back to Bujumbura has already been sanctioned. Burundi handed over samples of mainly indigenous food crop seeds to the centre in 1993 for safekeeping.

[Note to Subscribers: Please note there will be no IRIN update tomorrow, Thursday, due to an internal strategy meeting.]

Nairobi, 27 May 1998, 14:30 gmt

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UNITEDNATIONS Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 427 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 30 May-1 June 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Army launches major offensive against rebels

DRC military officials on Saturday announced the launch of "large-scale operations" against Mayi-Mayi rebels, supported by ex-soldiers from neighbouring countries. The announcement was broadcast over DRC television by "directeur de cabinet" in the defence ministry Major Kokolo and Major Kanou of the 10th Brigade who is in charge of military operations in eastern DRC. They said over 500 rebels had recently surrendered. According to Kanou, the Mayi-Mayi were working together with ex-FAR and Interahamwe militiamen from Rwanda, and Ugandan rebels of the National Movement for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU). He said the DRC army had launched operations along the DRC-Rwanda border to flush out the rebels from camps in the Miguelo, Karisimbi and Soke volcanoes. "The results were positive," he said.

Security chief arrested in Kinshasa

Military police in Kinshasa arrested a security service chief on Friday for blocking roads in his neighbourhood, Reuters reported. It quoted military sources as saying Shaban Sikatendi's home in Kinshasa's Mbinza district was surrounded by troops after he reportedly blocked the roads around his house, depriving neighbours of the right to move around freely. Justice Minister Mwenze Kongolo who was visiting family in the district was allegedly harassed.

Tanzania to train prison staff

Tanzania is to train DRC prison staff, after an agreement to that effect was signed in Dar es Salaam last week. According to Reuters, a Tanzanian government statement said two senior prison officials would soon visit the former Zaire on an assessment mission. They would make recommendations and launch a training programme.

BURUNDI: Buyoya dismisses possibility of foreign invasion

President Pierre Buyoya has dismissed rumours that the new partnership between the government and parliament would incite neighbouring countries to attack Burundi. Radio Burundi on Saturday quoted him as saying any country "with hegemonic ambitions" would be "firmly dealt with because Burundi has enough means to ensure its defence". Meanwhile, the opposition FRODEBU party on Saturday expressed its support for the institutional partnership. According to the radio, a FRODEBU statement "recognised the urgent need to work towards the restoration of peace and reconciliation".

Bishops urge success of dialogue

A joint statement by Catholic bishops in Burundi said steps had been made towards improving security, repatriating Burundians and in reconstruction. However, the situation was still worrying, the statement said. The bishops urged Burundians to work together to make dialogue a success, rather than resorting to violence and injustice.

RWANDA: Donors expected to release funds for economic revival

The government has said it is looking for donors to supply around US $767 million over the next three years to finance economic reforms and rebuild the economy, Reuters reported. It said Finance Minister Donald Kaberuka told a news conference in Kigali on Friday he was optimistic about a meeting between the government and donors tomorrow (Tuesday) in the Swedish capital Stockholm. He said the government was expecting US $367 million from donors for economic reforms which form the basis of a proposed IMF Enhanced Structual Adjustment Facility (ESAF) loan. But the government was also seeking a further US $400 million to cope with the continuing effects of the 1994 genocide. Kaberuka said money was needed for social spending, a genocide survivors' fund, reintegrating demobilised soldiers and returning refugees and to rebuilt the civil service.

GREAT LAKES: EU ministers to visit region and assess "misunderstandings"

The EU is to send a trio of junior ministers to assess "misunderstandings" in the relationship between traditional allies in the Great Lakes region, Reuters reported. The ministerial troika, accompanied by the EU's special envoy to the region Aldo Ajello, will travel from 2-4 June to meet DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila and Uganda's Yoweri Museveni. The visit will also cover Rwanda and Burundi ahead of the Burundi peace talks due to start in Arusha on 15 June. The team, led by Tony Lloyd, Britain's junior foreign minister responsible for Africa, will include ministers from Luxembourg and Austria.

SUDAN: Peace more important than relief - Turabi

Finding an end to Sudan's civil war is more important than carrying out relief operations in the famine-threatened south, Sudan's powerful parliamentary speaker Hassan al-Turabi was reported by the local press as saying on Sunday. "The real humanitarian aid for the people affected by the war in south Sudan is to bolster efforts for ending the war and achieving peace," Turabi told visiting US Congressman Tony Hall. "Emphasis on humanitarian assistance is useless so long as there are foreign circles that fan the war and hinder the peace efforts," he added. Turabi said that most of the relief funds are going on administrative costs, and would be better spent on infrastructural projects and development programmes.

Congressman shocked by conditions in south

Hall, a Democrat Congressman from Ohio, left Sudan for Kenya on Sunday after a four-day visit. In Nairobi, he said he was shocked at what he had seen and called on the United States to take action to relieve conditions in the south, AFP reported. "If the United States is truly sorry for doing too little to stop Rwanda's atrocities, we should act now to stop Sudan's," he said. Hall said he saw thousands of people forced into mosquito-infested swamps in Bahr al-Ghazal state to flee marauding raiders. "I felt numb as I walked over the bodies and skeletons (of people killed by the raiders)," Hall said.

Women prisoners released from disease-ridden jail

Sixteen babies have died in the women's prison in Omdurman, Sudan's twin capital, prompting the release of 827 women from the disease-ridden jail, AFP reported the local press as saying on Thursday. The daily 'Al-Gamhouria' reported that the mortality rate among infants in the prison had been one or two each day after an outbreak of disease causing diarrhoea and other symptoms in the overcrowded jail. The women had been jailed for drinking or brewing alcohol. The infants either accompanied them into prison or were born inside the jail. The paper said the prison's planned capacity was 200 inmates.

ANGOLA: UNITA ignores deadline on handing back territory to government

UNITA has ignored yet another key deadline in the implementation of the Angolan peace process, the BBC reported. The former rebel movement had been given until midnight on 31 May to hand over towns under its control. Less than an hour before the deadline, a delegation arrived in Luanda from UNITA headquarters in central Angola with fresh proposals for restoring momentum to the peace process. The delegation went into talks with the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye. According to the BBC's correspondent in Luanda, it is probable that UNITA has proposed new dates for a phased handover of the remaining key towns under its control.

After a six-hour meeting on Saturday with UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, Beye said the movement was refusing to make concessions on the handover of territory. A UNITA spokesman told the BBC that it accepted the handover in principle, but wanted the issue of human rights abuses by the national police dealt with first. Introducing a peace plan late last month, the UN envoy threatened to resign and recommend economic sanctions against UNITA if it failed to comply with the accords.

UNITA says Beye's peace plan "doomed"

A UNITA statement released in Washington on Wednesday said Beye's efforts to win UNITA compliance "is doomed to failure." According to the statement, posted on UNITA's website, Beye's plan departs from the premise of military concessions from UNITA in exchange for political concessions by the government. The statement claimed that Beye, "is ordering UNITA to turn over the few remaining areas under its control, where its supporters have taken refuge from government-sponsored carnage, without offering guarantees of safety and security for these people."

Nairobi, 1 June 1998, 13:25 gmt

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IRIN Update 428 for 2 June 98.6.2

UNITED NATIONS Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 428 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 2 June 1998)

RWANDA: Rebels produce newspaper outlining their cause

Rebels in northwest Rwanda appear to be publicising their insurgency with the emergence of a publication outlining their aims. According to AFP, the paper 'Umucunguzi' (Saviour) is published in Gisenyi, mainly in Kinyarwanda but with some articles in French. It names the rebels' political wing as the Peuple en armes pour liberer le Rwanda (PALIR), with its armed wing the Armee pour la liberation du Rwanda (ALIR). The paper describes the Rwandan Patriotic Army as an "army of occupation" and urges Rwandans to take up arms. The May edition contains a map, claiming rebels are active in half the country and predicting victory. It also forecast an upsurge of fighting in the central prefecture of Gitarama. In June 1996, PALIR issued a statement describing itself as a "resistance movement" against the RPA and named its armed wing as the Front de Resistance Interieure (FRI). It denied targeting unarmed civilians.

Thousands demonstrate against insurgents

Over 30,000 people yesterday demonstrated peacefully against the rebel insurgency in Mbogo commune of Kigali Rurale prefecture, the Rwanda News Agency reported. It quoted the local mayor Habiyaremye Oswald as saying the protest "was a manifestation of the people's opposition to those who incite violence in the country".

University professor sentenced to death for genocide

A court in Butare yesterday (Monday) sentenced a university professor to death for genocide crimes, after which he seriously injured three people on his way back to prison. The Rwanda News Agency said Professor Geoffrey Gatera, who headed the medical faculty at the national university, wrestled the steering wheel from the driver of the vehicle taking him back to prison and crashed into a bicycle and another car, seriously injuring the three people. He was charged with involvement in the massacre of hundreds of Tutsis who came to the university hospital in Butare seeking refuge.

Meanwhile six people were sentenced to death in the southwest prefecture of Cyangugu, accused of killing five UN human rights workers last year, AFP reported. It cited RNA as saying the five men and one woman were identified as "infiltrators" when the verdict was handed down on 26 May.

Rwanda, ex-Yugoslavia joint appeal court to sit in Arusha

The joint Appeal Court of the Rwandan and ex-Yugoslavia war tribunals is due to sit in Arusha, Tanzania, on 8 June, according to the independent Hirondelle news agency. It will the first time it sits in Arusha and is expected to consider two appeals, one involving the possibility of collective trials and the other a plea on false testimony.

Chiluba holds talks with Bizimungu

Zambian President Frederick Chiluba paid a brief visit to Kigali yesterday where he met his Rwandan counterpart Pasteur Bizimungu, the Rwanda News Agency reported. Bizimungu's spokesman Joseph Bideri said they discussed bilateral and regional ties. RNA said Bideri refused to give more details, but the agency noted that both Zambia and Rwanda are members of the six-country group which formed a "regional initiative" following the overthrow of ex-Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko.

UN team investigating illegal arms sales re-instated, Annan confirms

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has confirmed the resumption of work by an international commission investigating illegal arms sales in the Great Lakes region. He said the four-man commission re-established its base in Nairobi on 13 May and resumed contacts with relevant parties in the region. The activities of the commission will be financed from the UN Trust Fund for Rwanda, Annan said in a letter to the president of the Security Council.

UGANDA: Six die in rebel ambush

At least six people died when rebels from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) attacked and burned a bus in the northern Kitgum area yesterday, AFP reported. It recalled this was the second ambush in as many days in the Kitgum region. On Sunday, two people were reported killed when their vehicle came under rebel attack.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Refugees in Sudan reportedly want to return

Sudan's ambassador to Kinshasa, Hayard Hassan, has said some 3,600 DRC refugees in Sudan have indicated their desire to return home, PANA news agency reported. He said the two countries were discussing ways to facilitate the repatriation of the refugees who include both civilians and soldiers. According to DRC Interior Minister, the decision follows President Laurent-Desire Kabila's appeal to Congolese exiles to return home and take part in national reconstruction.

Five ministers sacked in cabinet reshuffle

Kabila last night reshuffled his cabinet, sacking five ministers and expanding the government from 29 to 37 members, AFP reported. They include four state ministers, 26 ministers and seven deputy ministers. ADFL Secretary-General Deogratias Bugera comes in as state minister to the presidency. The five who lost their portfolios are under arrest for alleged corruption.

Kabila meets Tshisekedi

Kabila has reportedly met opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi in the southeastern city of Lubumbashi, AFP said, quoting an anonymous government official. No official details of Saturday's talks have been given. Kabila refused to confirm the meeting on his return to Kinshasa yesterday, but the government official described the talks as "very tense", adding they focused on reconstruction and reconciliation. Kabila earlier this year banished Tshisekedi to his home area.

ANGOLA: UNITA proposes new date for handover of territory

UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said on Monday that UNITA had proposed a 25 June date for turning over to the government its four remaining strongholds of Andulo, Bailundo, Nhareya and Mongo, in the centre of the country. The offer follows UNITA's failure to abide by a 31 May deadline set by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye. Eckhard said UNITA had proposed that the technical preparations for the handover be finalised from 17-21 June. According to AFP, in weekend talks between senior UNITA and UN officials, UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi asked Beye for a period of reflection to allow UNITA to come up with concrete proposals for implementation of the final clauses of the 1994 peace agreement.

ZAMBIA: Kaunda cleared of coup charges

Former Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda was cleared of charges of advanced knowledge of last year's coup attempt when he appeared in court on Monday, news media reported. Attorney-General Bonaventure Mutale told the judge that the state was dropping all charges against Kaunda and his personal bodyguard, Mofyci Kaulungombe. Kaunda had been charged with concealing information of the coup bid. He appeared in court with some 80 other people accused of involvement in the foiled putsch.

Nairobi, 2 June 1998, 14:15 gmt

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Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

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U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 429 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 3 June 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Uvira tense after jail attacked

Uvira is said to be tense, after Banyamulenge soldiers reportedly stormed the local jail on Sunday and released a prisoner. Humanitarian sources told IRIN today (Wednesday) the freed prisoner was Ruhimbika Muller, a representative of the Banyamulenge NGO Groupe Milima, who was arrested earlier on Sunday while crossing the DRC border from Burundi. Local sources said Muller was wanted by the DRC authorities for remarks he allegedly made over foreign radio stations. The sources added that Muller is now at large and arrest warrants have been issued for other Banyamulenge.

Humanitarian sources also told IRIN three people were killed this week after two vehicles were ambushed on the Bukavu-Uvira road. The road remains open, but travel is not advisable, the sources said.

No conflict with Uganda, Kabila says

President Laurent-Desire Kabila has rejected suggestions there is conflict between his country and Uganda. In an interview broadcast by national television on Sunday night, he said DRC "needed many friends, it needed to walk alongside other states". He blamed some international media and those "who wanted to sow confusion in the region" for the allegations. Africans should "identify those who want to divide us", he added. On the situation in eastern DRC, he claimed some people were trying to destabilise the region by supplying arms to ex-FAR members and Ugandan rebels. Border security with Rwanda, Uganda and Sudan had been reinforced to stop smuggling, he said.

Meanwhile, the minister of state in the Ugandan president's office Amama Mbabazi told the 'EastAfrican' weekly on Monday the Ugandan government was "using diplomatic channels" to look into allegations of interference by a DRC minister. Mbabazi said "as of now" relations between the two countries "are not worrying". "If there are problems they will be sorted out," he said. The 'EastAfrican' added that according to unconfirmed reports, President Yoweri Museveni had sent a special envoy to Kinshasa with a message for Kabila.

UDPS slams Kabila's meeting with Tshisekedi

The opposition Union pour la democratie et le progres social (UDPS) has described last week's meeting between its leader Etienne Tshisekedi and President Kabila as "worrying rather than reassuring". In a statement issued yesterday, the UDPS accused Kabila of continuing to hold Tshisekedi prisoner in his home village. The UDPS said it did not want negotiations, rather it wanted Kabila to resign. An anonymous government official, quoted by AFP yesterday, described the Lubumbashi meeting between Kabila and Tshisekedi as "relaxed".

Butembo, Beni businessmen concerned over "climate of insecurity"

Businessmen from Butembo and Beni, two towns that border Uganda, last week expressed concern over the "climate of insecurity" which they said was created by the military searching for Mayi-Mayi rebels. According to Gabonese radio, they told a news conference civilians were coming under attack from time to time "by soldiers and policemen who rape, steal, kill or arrest people". Valerien Kasinge, the procurator of Butembo and Beni diocese, said he believed the local Nande people were being targeted "under the pretext of a so-called genuine fight against the Mayi-Mayi".

UGANDA: Museveni vows to crush rebels

Some 150 Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels have been killed in northern Uganda and 100 have surrendered to the army in recent fighting, President Yoweri Museveni claimed on Monday. He vowed to militarily crush the LRA and rebels operating in the west of the country, the official 'New Vision' said. According to Kenya's 'Daily Nation', Museveni blamed leadership weaknesses among army commanders in the north for the failure to end the insurgency. Meanwhile, 10 people died in an LRA ambush near Kitgum on Monday. The LRA also fired mortar rounds at a hospital some 8 km from Gulu town, the 'New Vision' reported. The shells landed close to a displaced camp sheltering 3,000 people.

Human rights group calls for release of illegally-held detainees

The Uganda Human Rights Commission has called on the security forces to release illegally-held detainees. The commission said in a statement broadcast on state radio today that it has investigated several complaints of abductions, illegal arrests and detentions. It added that it has reasonable proof that some detainees are being held in ungazetted facilities.

RWANDA: Six family members killed in Gisenyi

Six members of one family were murdered in Kabiza, in Gisenyi prefecture, on Sunday night, AFP reported citing witnesses. It said a pastor, his wife and four children were killed at their home, but there was no indication as to who was behind the murders.

EU stresses common stand on arresting genocide suspects

An EU delegation which visited Rwanda yesterday (Tuesday), has said member countries will adopt a common stand on Rwandan genocide suspects living on their territory, the Rwanda News Agency reported. British Minister of State in the Foreign Office, Tony Lloyd, who is a member of the delegation, said discussions were underway "so that every suspected genocide perpetrator is arrested in every country of the EU". According to RNA, discussions with Rwandan officials focused mainly on bilateral ties and the judicial system.

BURUNDI: EU envoy calls for lifting embargo

The head of the delegation, Aldo Ajello, who is the EU special envoy for the Great Lakes, told AFP last night the regional economic embargo against Burundi should be lifted at the Arusha peace talks next month. The delegation was due in Bujumbura after visiting Rwanda.

Nyerere adviser in Bujumbura

Felix Mosha, an adviser to Burundi peace mediator Julius Nyerere, arrived in Bujumbura yesterday to prepare for peace talks due to resume in Arusha on 15 June. Burundi radio said Mosha was due to meet various Burundian officials, including President Pierre Buyoya. Exiled FRODEBU opposition leader Jean Minani told the 'EastAfrican' that power-sharing between the government and FRODEBU would be one of the major issues to be discussed in Arusha.

Ministers adopt draft laws

The Council of Ministers has adopted two draft laws which will now be submitted to the national assembly for approval, the Agence burundaise de presse reported. The first law deals with expanding parliament and the second concerns the organisation and operation of the constitutional court.

SUDAN: SPLA claims capture of key garrison town in Blue Nile

The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) claimed it had taken the garrison of Ulu, in Blue Nile province of eastern Sudan. A spokesman for the SPLA told news agencies the rebels had killed more than 70 government soldiers and captured weapons and materiel. A government army statement issued in Khartoum yesterday acknowledged "fierce battles" in the area. The Sudanese national service coordinator announced plans earlier this week to recruit an additional 250,000 civilians into the military this year alone, AFP reported.

Government launches airlift, WFP relocates staff

In humanitarian operations, the government has launched its own airlift of food to government-held Wau in Bahr al-Ghazal, AFP reports. Elsewhere in Bahr al-Ghazal, WFP announced that an increase in insecurity had forced them to relocate staff from Twic county. About 80,000 of 150,000 beneficiaries in the area will have their food aid delayed, WFP told IRIN today.

KENYA: Three charged with murder of Sendashonga

A Rwandese and two Ugandan nationals were arraigned before a Nairobi court yesterday charged with the murder of former Rwandese interior minister Seth Sendashonga. The three men were also accused of the murder of Sendashonga's driver in a city shooting last month. They denied the charges and were remanded in custody until 16 June, Kenyan radio monitored by the BBC, reported.

ANGOLA: UN warns of military build-up

The head of the UN peacekeeping force in Angola has warned there is evidence of a military build-up in preparation for a potential return to civil war. Maj-Gen Phillip Sibanda of the Zimbabwe army refused to point the finger at either side at a press conference in Harare yesterday, the South African news agency SAPA reported. He said there were hardliners in both the government and UNITA calling for a military solution. He said he had reported to the UN's peacekeeping headquarters in New York and briefed the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola on the volatile situation. "I made my views very clear, that there was certain very disturbing evidence on the ground in Angola which made me very uncomfortable," he added.

Nairobi, 3 June 1998, 14:45 gmt

[ENDS]

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U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 433 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 9 June 1998)

RWANDA: WFP begins mass food distribution in northwest Rwanda

WFP said today (Tuesday) it had begun an emergency food distribution for more than 100,000 internally displaced Rwandans in the prefectures of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. The agency said in a statement the distribution, assisted by other UN agencies, started last week in Gisenyi where 200 mt of food was provided to 25,000 people in four communes. It will continue over the next two months until a total of 1,200 mt of WFP food aid is handed out in the two prefectures. Heavy insecurity, including frequent rebel incursions, has plagued much of northwestern Rwanda for nearly six months and has led to a large displacement of the population. As a result, WFP said UN agencies and other aid organisations have had only partial and periodic access to the two prefectures, limiting the amount of humanitarian assistance that could be sent in.

"Up to now, we've only been able to bring in small amounts of relief food to a few areas," said Gerard Van Dijk, WFP's Country Director for Rwanda. "Now we hope to reach more remote villages where reports indicate that displaced people are in urgent need of our help... with all the fighting, people have lost their ability to cultivate, turning a once productive population into food aid recipients." WFP said it was transporting all its supplies to the insecure region under military escort. Staff from other UN agencies such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNHCR, and UNICEF are accompanying the trips to try to assess the additional humanitarian needs of the affected populations.

ICTR rejects proposal for collective trials, adopts "speed-up" measures

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) trying genocide suspects yesterday (Monday) rejected a proposal to have the accused tried collectively. The tribunal's court of appeal, sitting in Arusha for the first time, rejected a recommendation from the prosecutor that 29 suspects be tried together. James Stewart of the prosecutor's office told the Hirondelle independent press agency that, while the appeals court decision was to be respected, it would not change the "fundamental orientation" of the prosecutor's strategy to achieve collective trials at some time in the future.

But the UN court did adopt a series of amendments to its Rules of Procedure and Evidence in order to speed up pending cases. The new amendments include a decision that will allow judges to deal with judgement and sentencing procedures together rather than separately. In order to improve legal assistance to suspects and accused persons, the judges decided that only counsels who have at least 10 years of relev ant experience can be assigned to indigent suspects or accused persons.

More support for victims of sexual violence

The new procedures also provide for conferences before the presentation of evidence in order to allow Judges to shorten their examination of some of the witnesses, or to reduce the number of witnesses to be called to prove the same facts. The judges will have more control over the interrogation of witnesses so as to make the interrogations and presentations more effective and to avoid needless delays. The session also adopted measures which will enable the admission into evidence of written testimonies of expert witnesses. The Judges also amended the Rules to ensure better support for witnesses, includi ng physical and psychological rehabilitation, especially counselling in cases of rape and sexual assault.

Rwandan authorities start house evictions

The Rwandan authorities on 1 June began evicting the first of about 10,000 families from houses they have been occupying in the capital, Kigali, since their owners fled the country during the 1994 genocide. The Rwandan news agency said those evicted were being given land, tents, iron sheeting and other materials to help them build new houses. The project involves resettling families from houses they occupy illegally into new shelters and returning the houses to their legal owners. The housing crisis in Kigali has been exacerbated by a doubling in the city's population from an estimated 200,000 to 500,000 people as a result of the massive return of old and new cases of refugees.

BURUNDI: New regulations for humanitarian flights

New regulations are to apply to sanctions-exempt flights to Burundi, UN sources told IRIN. The weekly flights, operated from Nairobi by Kenya Airways with the blessing of the Regional Sanctions Coordinating Committee (RSCC), are intended to allow aid workers, diplomats and journalists to travel to and from Burundi while sanctions ban regular commercial flights. The new regulations require travellers to present an official letter from their organisation to the RSCC-approved travel agents in either Nairobi or Bujumbura before a ticket will be issued.

Army says it killed 13 rebels in weekend clash

Burundi's army said today that it killed 13 Hutu rebels and lost one soldier in a weekend clash. According to an AFP report the fighting took place on Saturday some 90 km southeast of the capital, in the province of Makamba.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Bandits said to kill monk and guard

Armed "bandits" have killed a monk and a policeman in Kinshasa, press reports said on Monday. Newspapers reported that Brother Floribert Kamaragi, a 29-year-old theology student at the University of Kinshasa, was killed overnight Saturday outside his room at a monastery which the attackers entered after overcoming the guard. They next went to the university campus in a stolen car and killed a policeman who was guarding the campus, 'Le Phare' reported. 'La Reference Plus' added that some assailants returned to the campus during the day Sunday and stole a limousine in broad daylight.

DRC ambassador to Brussels dismissed

Justine Kasa-Vubu was dismissed last week as DRC ambassador to Belgium and replaced by Emile Kanengele, an ex-FAZ officer, AFP reported yesterday. Quoting the Belgian press agency, Belga, it added that the Belgian Foreign Affairs Ministry last week received an "unsigned note" from the DRC authorities saying a new ambassador had been nominated. Justine Kasa-Vubu, daughter of the first post-independence Congolese president, was for several years the UDPS (Union pour la democratie et le progres social) representative in Belgium. She later joined the ADFL movement of President Laurent-Desire Kabila and served as civil service minister in his first government.

GREAT LAKES AND CENTRAL AFRICA: UN envoy "very concerned"

The UN's top official for the Great Lakes has told IRIN he is "very concerned" about the ability of the UN to maintain "essential humanitarian and rehabilitation programmes" in the region following a poor response to its 1998 appeal. UN Special Representative and Humanitarian Advisor Ambassador Berhanu Dinka said he would now be trying to refocus the attention of the international community on the plight of the people in the region. IRIN recently reported (Update 430) the UN's 1998 appeal for the Great Lakes and Central Africa had received less than 10 percent support as of the end of May.

UGANDA: Rebels massacre 60 people in western Uganda

Ugandan rebels massacred more than 60 people, including 40 technical school students, in an attack yesterday in western Kabarole district, news organisations reported. A senior military official was quoted as saying some 80 fighters of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) overpowered some 40 government soldiers near Fort Portal town in the worst such attack since the ADF began their rebellion against the government of President Museveni in late 1996. Witnesses said about 80 rebels overpowered an army unit before attacking the school and set dormitories on fire when the students refused to come out. The BBC reported about 100 were still unaccounted for by Monday evening, triggering fears they may have been abducted by the rebels who have in the past kidnapped young men to bolster their forces. Internal Affairs Minister Tom Butime, meanwhile, has called for cooperation from the public in giving information on ADF forces.

UNITED NATIONS: UN deputy head again stresses need for end to conflict

UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette, speaking against a backdrop of increasing tension on the continent, has said that there can be no sustainable development in an environment of conflict and violence in Africa. Addressing the 34th Summit of Heads of State of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on Monday, Frechette said that the delay in implementing the arrangements for resolving some of the long-standing conflicts on the continent continues to be of serious concern."We wish to seize this opportun ity to once again urge all those engaged in peace processes to r edouble their efforts and live up to their commitments."

Nairobi, 9 June 1998 14:30 GMT

[ENDS]

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IRIN Update No. 434 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 10 June 1998)

RWANDA: Rebels attack refugee camp, kill at least 29

At least 29 people were killed and some 20 others injured when about 1,000 "infiltratrators" attacked Kinihira refugee camp in Kayove commune in the northwest prefecture of Gisenyi, Rwandan radio reported yesterday (Tuesday). The attackers, consisting of young men, women and children, were armed with machetes, spears and pangas, witnesses were quoted as saying. They added the assailants numbered over 1,000 and attacked the camp, which shelters about 300 refugees, in three successive waves at around one p.m. local time on Monday. In a separate incident overnight Monday, 11 other people were killed by rebels in Mushubati and Buringa communes in Gitarama prefecture, the radio added.

Government plans to sell off state enterprises

The Rwandan government plans to raise some about 1.6 billion Rwandan francs ($5.3 million) for its 1998 budget through divesting, liquidating and hiring out state-owned enterprises under a three-year privatisation programme of public enterprises. On 29 May, the Rwandan news agency reported the government raised some $3 million after the cabinet endorsed the sale of four parastatals, including two hotels and two processing factories.

Mali police arrest Rwandan ex-justice minister

Police in Mali have arrested Rwanda's former justice minister and genocide suspect, news organisations reported on Tuesday. Quoting informed sources, they said Mathieu N'Garoupatse, who was a minister in the government of Juvenal Habyarimana, was in detention in Bamako. Nearly 20 Rwandans, including some suspected of leading roles in the 1994 genocide, fled to Bamako after the Rwandan Patriotic Front took power.

SUDAN: Three aid workers killed in Nuba mountains

The UN said today (Wednesday) three humanitarian aid workers were killed and three others wounded in a shooting incident in the Nuba mountains of South Kordofan state in Sudan. Two of those killed were officers from WFP and the third was a staff member from the Sudanese Red Crescent Society. The three injured people also work for the Sudanese Red Crescent, the UN said in an official statement. All six were Sudanese nationals.

The UN said the incident took place during an assessment of humanitarian needs in government villages in the area, including a WFP registration and food distribution. The victims were in a WFP vehicle which was shot at while moving between the villages of Arie and Hadab in Kadugli province. The assailants fled the scene and their identity is unknown. The UN said a full investigation of the incident would be conducted in the coming days.

Garang says he spurned peace offer - AFP

Sudan rebel leader John Garang said yesterday he had turned down an offer to make peace with the Sudanese government, AFP reported. According to the agency said Garang had said in a telephone interview his former deputy Riak Machar spent two hours trying to persuade him to join the peace process at a meeting last weekend in Uganda. Machar, who left the SPLA last year, returned to Kampala on Tuesday, state television reported. He said his discussions had focused on the next round of peace talks, slated for later this year in Addis Ababa. Meanwhile, the war continues. On Tuesday, SPLA said in a statement issued in Nairobi that it had captured two army garrisons from government troops in the eastern state of Kassala since the weekend. The statement said Haladet and Nhalalob garrisons, north of Kassala town, were captured in two offensives, launched concurrently, last Friday.

BURUNDI: WFP distributes to displaced people in Islale

WFP is distributing 30-day rations to 19,000 displaced people in Isale and 15-day rations to 16,000 displaced in Mubimbi and Bujumbura Rurale, according to a UN humanitarian report. It said 30-day distributions had also been completed to 19,784 people in Murwi and 15,015 people in Bukinyanyana in Citiboke commune.

The weekly OCHA report also said that at the end of May, 6,419 people in Bubanza were benefiting from supplementary feeding provided by Children's Aid Direct (CAD) through six health centres and an additional 3,087 pregnant and lactating mothers were also receiving similar assistance.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Kabila appoints new ADFL head

DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila has named a new general-secretary for his Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL) movement, the Agence congolaise de presse (ACP) reported yesterday. Vincent Mutomb Tshibal, until last week's government reshuffle youth and sports minister, replaces Deogratias Bugera who became Minister of State in the Office of the President. Bugera is one of the four founding members of the ADFL created in Lemera, South Kivu, in October 1996. ACP quoted ADFL deputy general secretary and Minister of State for Internal Affairs Gaetan Kakudji saying that the nomination "aimed at re-energizing the movement's activities and making it shine among the masses".

Kasa-Vubu accused of disloyalty

Justine Kasa-Vubu, who was dismissed last week as DRC ambassador to Belgium, was recalled because of her failure to support the Kabila government, ACP reported. The agency said she failed to welcome personally Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha during a recent visit to Brussels and refused to accredit two diplomats sent to her embassy. Kasa-Vubu, daughter of the first post-independence Congolese president, was for several years the Brussels representative of the opposition UDPS (Union pour la democratie et le progres social).

UNHCR continues with repatriations

UNHCR had repatriated 1,000 Congolese refugees from the Kyaka II refugee camp in western Uganda by 1 June since the resumption of the exercise 10 days ago. A UNHCR spokesperson told IRIN that the voluntary repatriation programme, which was suspended in mid-May, due to a cholera outbreak and poor road conditions, was expected to last for several months before all the remaining 9,000 refugees who have registered for the exercise are repatriated. A total of 2,000 refugees have been so far repatriated. There are still 13,000 Congolese refugees in two camps in Uganda.

UGANDA: Museveni vows to crush rebels

President Yoweri Museveni on Tuesday called for action to crush rebels following a reported massacre of more than 40 students in an attack on a technical college in Kabarole in western Uganda. "Grounds for wiping out these (rebel) groups exist but those small weaknesses here and there that persist must be eliminated," Reuters reported Museveni as saying at celebrations to mark a national holiday. "It is my ultimate responsibility ... to ensure that these weaknesses are eliminated," he said. "At the end of the day those who have caused so much suffering to the people of Uganda will themselves pay for what they have done." Meanwhile, AFP quoted a senior military official as saying bungling by soldiers allowed the attack by rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) to take place. "If the commanding officer had put up a fight then reinforcements would have come from different detachments," AFP quoted the official as saying. The ADF rebels torched the students' dormitories. Estimates of the death toll have varied from 40 to 60, but 37 students are still missing, believed abducted.

Nairobi, 10 June 1998 14:30 GMT

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IRIN Update No. 436 for Central and Eastern Africa (Friday 12 June 1998)

SUDAN: Government plane bombs World Vision feeding centre

A Sudanese government Antonov bomber dropped six bombs around an emergency feeding centre, run by World Vision International (WVI), at Panacier in southern Sudan's Gogrial County, the NGO said in a statement issued in Nairobi today (Friday). The WVI statement said the attack took place at 11:30 a.m. local time on Thursday. There were no casualties.

SPLA rebels deny they were behind Nuba mountain deaths

SPLA rebels have vehemently denied government allegations they were responsible for the deaths of three aid workers in the Nuba mountains area of south Kordofan state earlier this week. AFP reported SPLA spokesman in Nairobi, John Luk Jok, as saying SPLA forces in the area were not aware of the incident and were not present in the precise location where the incident took place. Two WFP workers and an employee of the Sudanese Red Crescent Society were shot dead on Tuesday when the vehicle in which they were travelling drove into a hail of bullets.

UN appoints new Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs

The UN reported from its New York headquarters that Secretary-General Kofi Annan had decided to appoint a new Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs for Sudan. It said Annan yesterday named Tom Vraalsen, who is currently Norway's Ambassador to the US, to the job. Vraalsen succeeds Robe Schaik who has announced his resignation, effective 15 June 1998.

Meanwhile, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict left for Sudan today to try and secure the release of youths abducted by Ugandan rebels. Olara Otunnu told reporters after briefing the UN Security Council that he would ask Sudanese authorities to use their good offices to help obtain the release of children reportedly held by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

BURUNDI: Buyoya sworn in as president

Military leader Major Pierre Buyoya has been sworn in as Burundi's president - two years after taking power in a coup. The swearing-in ceremony at the Kigobe Congress Palace in Bujumbura took place on Thursday and followed agreement between his government and the parliament on a new transitional constitution. The accord is designed to pave the way for the Tutsi-led government to share power with the country's mainly Hutu opposition and end years of ethnic strife. Peace talks are scheduled to resume in Tanzania on Monday between all parties to the conflict, including rebel groups based outside the country. In his address, Buyoya urged all Burundians who had taken the path of war to take part in the mediation.

Vice-presidents named, EU hails deal

Later on Thursday, Buyoya named his two vice-presidents who, as part of the constitutional reform package, replace the premiership which has been dropped. The two men are Frederic Bamvuginyumvira, a Hutu who is currently president of the parliamentary group in the Frodebu party, and Mathias Sinamenye, an ethnic Tutsi who is currently the governor of the central bank.

Meanwhile, the European Union said the adoption of the constitutional reforms on a political platform of transition was an important step towards peace and reconciliation. In a statement, issued by Britain, the current holder of the EU presidency, the EU declared: "It is a significant gesture which offers hope that the Burundians will pursue the efforts which they have begun. This important step towards national reconciliation must be complemented by negotiations between all the Burundi parties without exception from both inside and outside the country."

RWANDA: Over 2,000 genocide suspects register to plead guilty

Some 2,086 genocide suspects held in two Rwandan prisons have indicated they are ready to confess their guilt, the Rwandan news agency (RNA) reported. The inmates made their wishes known yesterday (Thursday) to justice ministry officials visiting two prisons in Kibungo prefecture in the eastern part of the country. RNA said the new wave of confessions brought the number of genocide suspects who have applied for confessions since the public execution of 22 people last April to about 5,000.

Hutu rebels claim responsibility for attack on displaced people's camp

The armed wing of the newly-created Hutu rebel movement, the Parti en armes pour liberer le Rwanda (PALIR), has claimed responsibility for an attack last Monday on Kinihira camp in Kayove commune in the northwest prefecture of Gisenyi. It was the first such official claim by the rebel movement, which is made up of former FAR soldiers and Interahamwe militiamen. The claim of responsibility was made in a communique issued in the northern town of Ruhengeri. It denied allegations by survivors of the raid that children had been involved in the attack. At least 29 people were killed and some 20 others injured in the attack on the camp which houses about 300 Tutsis who left Rwanda in 1959 and returned to the country after the 1994 genocide, but who have not yet found housing, AFP reported.

Kagame continues with Ethiopia-Eritrea mediation effort

Vice-President and Defence Minister Paul Kagame has begun a visit to Eritrea and Ethiopia as part of ongoing efforts to mediate an end to the conflict between the two Horn of Africa neighbours, Rwandan radio reported yesterday. It said the two countries had "bestowed their trust on Rwanda in the resolution of their misunderstanding because of the ties of friendship and cooperation uniting the two countries and Rwanda". A recent joint Rwandan-US peace plan failed to stop the fighting.

TANZANIA: UNHCR concerned over "armed refugees" story in local paper

UNHCR in Dar es Salaam has expressed concern over an article in the daily Tanzanian 'Guardian' newspaper claiming armed Burundian refugees are attacking the local population. In a statement to the newspaper's editor, the UN agency said there was no evidence crimes committed in Biharamulo, Kagera region, originated from within the refugee camps. The statement acknowledged a rise in security incidents in the region, but said the escalation of conflict in Burundi and Rwanda had probably contributed to a proliferation of weapons used by "criminal elements". It did not rule

out that a "small number" of refugees had engaged in criminal activities and said they could be brought to justice by the host country.

UGANDA: Death toll from technical school attack hits 80

The death toll from an attack on a technical school in Kabarole district in western Uganda on Monday by rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) has risen to 80, the daily 'New Vision' newspaper reported. Meanwhile, the government said today the army would set up a tactical headquarters in Bwera near the border with Democratic Republic of Congo in an attempt to put an end to the ADF insurgency. Army Chief of Staff James Kazini said the unit would be commanded by officers and men from the region to try in a combined effort with local people to "flush out the terrorists".

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Kabila vows to go ahead with polls

President Laurent-Desire Kabila has pledged to go ahead with planned general elections next year, with or without foreign aid, Reuters reported. Kabila told a meeting in Kinshasa last night the government was going "to stick to our timetable, even if no-one comes to our aid". "It's a challenge," he went on. "This does not mean we don't want help, but we don't want to be beggars continually." He urged Congolese to invest in the hinterland in a bid to rebuild the country's shattered infrastructure, Reuters said.

27 tax officials arrested in corruption crackdown

In a continuing crackdown on corruption, the authorities have arrested 27 tax officials in Kinshasa for alleged illegal deals. State radio said police were sent to the tax headquarters on Wednesday to break up a network of officials who had been selling driving licences, vehicle number plates and other documents illegally for personal gain.

Nairobi, 12 June 1998 14:00 GMT

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IRIN Update No. 437 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 13-15 June 1998)

BURUNDI: Peace talks begin in Arusha

All-party peace talks opened in Arusha, Tanzania today (Monday) as a new government announced over the weekend ushered in 11 opposition members. News reports said the key ministerial posts of defence, finance and justice remain unchanged. The reshuffled government, in which the post of prime minister has been scrapped, follows last week's appointment of two vice-presidents. First vice-president Frederic Bamvuginyumvira, a member of the opposition FRODEBU party, would be the legal successor to President Pierre Buyoya if his term were cut short.

Meanwhile, a faction of the main rebel group Conseil national pour la defense de la democratie (CNDD) has reiterated its refusal to observe a ceasefire for the duration of the talks. According to the 'EastAfrican' today, an aide to suspended leader Leonard Nyangoma said any ceasefire should be negotiated at the meeting. Regional leaders and Burundian delegations began arriving in Arusha yesterday. Burundi's Peace Process Minister Ambroise Niyonsaba told Reuters representatives of the government, national assembly, the main UPRONA and FRODEBU parties, as well as members of civil society, were all in Arusha. President Buyoya arrived today, but CNDD's representation is still unclear.

Despite the sweeping government changes, FRODEBU maintains reform of the Tutsi-dominated army will be high on the agenda of the Arusha talks. "The army must be open to all ethnic groups," a senior official, Venerand Bakevyumusaya, told Reuters. The news agency commented that the meeting will also be a test for mediator, former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, accused of bias by the Burundi authorities. He has not set foot in Burundi since May 1996.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the weekend called for "a spirit of compromise, tolerance and reconciliation" at the talks. He urged the sides to "refrain from any action that could undermine the chances of reaching the sort of peaceful and stable settlement that is so necessary".

RWANDA: Growing food needs in northwest

A report by USAID, quoting local authorities, says there are an estimated 58,000 displaced people in northwest Gisenyi prefecture and 48,000 in Ruhengeri. According to the report, the Rwandan government has indicated it will be unable to provide for an increased and continued emergency response. The report points out WFP has begun transporting food aid into the region. The US embassy has intervened to allow monitoring of food deliveries in Gisenyi, the report said. It added that adequate monitoring is very difficult and negotiated on a daily basis. More and more people are emerging from hiding in the forests and therefore the need for assistance is growing.

Ex-FAR soldiers join army

Over 140 ex-FAR soldiers have been integrated into the Rwandan Patriotic Army after undergoing military re-education, the Rwandan News Agency reported on Friday. It said 141 ex-FAR members were inducted into the army at a ceremony in Mudende on Thursday. Commander Balthasar Ndengeyinka, in charge of the Kibuye-Gitarama military region and himself an ex-FAR fighter, told the ceremony the so-called "solidarity camps" were aimed at "providing a true civic education instead of the divisive ideology" of the former regime.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Archbishop concerned over attacks on religious communities

The archbiship of Kinshasa Cardinal Frederic Etsou Nzabi-Bamungwabai has expressed grave concern over recent attacks on religious communities in the capital. According to Gabonese radio, the attacks "are attributed to uniformed men who threaten and carry away all property and money belonging to the communities". The radio recalled an attack last week on a convent in the Kinshasa area of Ridimi in which a 22 year-old priest was killed by an armed group. In a bid to prevent crime, the radio said, the DRC military authorities have banned soldiers from moving around in uniform without permission.

Human rights report to be sent to DRC, Rwanda

UN spokesman Fred Eckard has said a report by the UN team that investigated alleged human rights violations in DRC earlier this year will be sent to the governments of Rwanda and DRC for their "advance information". The report will then be transmitted to the Security Council on 21 June, and will consequently be made public.

DRC representatives at the recent OAU meeting in Burkina Faso urged African countries to ignore the UN report, the Agence congolaise de presse (ACP) reported today. Justice Minister Mwenze Kongolo, quoted by the agency, said the report should be regarded as a "valueless document" as the investigation was never completed. Kongolo also called for enforcing an OAU resolution on special assistance to countries hosting refugees.

UGANDA: UN official concerned over "brutalisation" of children

The UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu, has expressed shock and outrage over last week's killing of 80 students by rebels in western Uganda. The special representative said he was concerned over the plight of children in western and northern Uganda where rebel activities are rife. The continuing abuse and brutalisation of children was unacceptable, he said. The 'EastAfrican' today said Ugandan parliamentarians will this week demand an explanation from the government on how the rebels managed to carry out the attack without any military resistance.

The rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), who have been blamed for the students' deaths after an attack on their school in Kichwamba, said their "sole aim" was to attack Ugandan army detachments in the area. In a press statement, received by IRIN today, they claimed they "successfully" attacked the Ugandan soldiers and "left with sophisticated weapons captured from the UPDF (Ugandan People's Defence Force). The statement added the ADF's aim is to "engage the enemy and oust the Tutsi-dominated regime from power".

Museveni defends himself on chat show

President Yoweri Museveni, fed up with two hours of criticism on a radio talk show, personally called up the station on Saturday to defend himself. Reuters said he delivered a 20-minute monologue, thanked listeners and then hung up. Responding to the criticism in the 'Your Parliament'

programme, broadcast by the private Central Broadcasting Service, Museveni defended his controversial land bill, the presence of Rwandan minorities in Uganda and the suspension of political party activities.

SUDAN: Rebels again threaten Port Sudan-Khartoum road

Sudanese rebels are again threatening to cut the Port Sudan - Khartoum road. An attack east of Kassala last Wednesday by rebel forces inflicted "heavy losses in lives and equipment", according to rebel radio on Saturday, monitored by the BBC. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) claimed another town, Mabaan, in southern Blue Nile province was captured from government troops, which if confirmed, would mark the latest in a series of successful offensives in the area. Khartoum has an ongoing conscription programme that requires school leavers to do 12 - 18 months compulsory military service. Over 70 conscripts escaped a government training camp at Ailefoun on Friday, news agencies reported.

Oil reserves a force for "amalgamation"

Influential Sudanese leader Hassan al-Tourabi has said the construction of a 1,450 km pipeline, a refinery and other elements in a US $1.6 billion scheme to exploit Sudan's oil will mean "Sudan will become amalgamated. The country will fuse". Also quoted by the 'Financial Times' last week, former rebel leader Riak Machar said the oil revenue could be used to "redress imbalances and create confidence". An SPLA spokesman, quoted by AFP, said that the movement "could not be held responsible for the consequences" if oil workers in southern Sudan were caught up in the fighting.

Nairobi, 15 June 1998, 14:30 gmt

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IRIN Update No. 438 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 16 June 1998)

BURUNDI: Parties to meet mediator privately on second day of peace talks

Parties to the Burundi peace talks in Arusha are to hold private consultations with mediator Julius Nyerere today (Tuesday), Reuters reported. The agency cited diplomats as saying the talks, which began yesterday (Monday), would probably continue into next week.

Regional leaders who are also in Arusha said sanctions against Burundi would be lifted "when irreversible progress has been made". Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa yesterday said sanctions would remain until the conflicting sides "show an interest in bringing about peace", Tanzanian radio reported. In a brief opening address, Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni challenged all the Burundi leaders gathered in Arusha to choose the "correct turning point" in their country's history.

According to AFP, participants in yesterday's talks stated their willingness to negotiate, and President Pierre Buyoya described the meeting as "historic". However, Leonard Nyangoma who leads a faction of the main rebel group Conseil national pour la defense de la democratie (CNDD), reiterated his rejection of the "internal" peace dialogue in Burundi.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Over 10,000 apply for proposed assemblies

Over 10,000 people have applied for membership to the proposed Constituent and Legislative Assemblies, Congolese television reported. The television quoted the first deputy chairman of the Constitutional Commission, Delphin Banza Kangakoloa, as saying there would be no extension of last Friday's deadline and ruled out "quotas" to ensure people from the provinces and abroad were represented. "We want to set up a body to prepare for the elections and work out modalities for putting in place all the institutions of the future republic," he was quoted as saying. In a 25 May presidential decree, President Laurent-Desire Kabila declared any member of the new assembly had to be Congolese and not a "notorious dignatory" of the former regime of Mobutu Sese-Seko. "The president of the republic knows his own compatriots and he will know exactly whom to call," Kangakoloa declared.

Meanwhile, DRC Information and Media Minister Didier Mumengi announced that Kinshasa will host the next COMESA Heads of State summit on 29 June, Agence congolaise de presse (ACP) reported on Saturday. The summit will be preceded by a meeting of experts and ministers.

Cholera situation remains worrying in North Kivu

The cholera situation in North Kivu remains a serious cause for concern following identification of some 35 cases and one death last week in Goma town, humanitarian sources told IRIN. The sources said the recent outbreak included some cases coming from military camps. The situation in Goma now seems to have stabilised, but concerns remained over other parts of the province where access was difficult. A crisis committee has been set up by local authorities to evaluate the situation and coordinate the response of humanitarian organisations.

Baby boom among Virunga mountain gorillas

The Virunga National Park in North Kivu, after suffering 18 months of civil unrest and damage caused by refugee movements, has registered a "baby boom" among the threatened mountain gorillas. According to a press release by the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP), received today by IRIN, 10 baby gorillas have been born in the last 18 months, many of them in families which have been violently upset by events in recent years. The IGCP points out the huge refugee camps on the park's border and the subsequent exodus had a devastating impact on the park and its wildlife. The statement goes on to say that despite enormous problems and challenges in the region, conservation efforts are making a difference and the mountain gorillas are continuing to survive.

UGANDA: Commanding officer faces court martial over rebel attack

The commanding officer of an army detachment which failed to repel an attack by rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) has been arrested and will be court martialled, media reports said today. Quoting military officials, the reports alleged the officer, whose rank and identity were not revealed, ran away during the attack on Kichwamba technical school in western Uganda last week. At least 48 people died in the attack and over 100 students are still missing, many believed abducted.

SUDAN: Khartoum pledges cooperation with UN on children in armed conflict

The Sudanese government has pledged cooperation with the United Nations on the issue of children in armed conflicts, local press reports said on Monday. They quoted Sudanese First Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha as telling visiting UN envoy Olara Otunnu that Sudan was prepared to cooperate in protecting and guaranteeing the safety of minors in combat zones. Otunnu, the UN Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, arrived in Khartoum on Saturday for talks with Sudanese officials on the issue. Last week Otunnu told reporters he would ask the Sudanese authorities to use their good offices to help obtain the release of children abducted from Uganda and reportedly held by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

TANZANIA: Mining pollution said causing environmental damage to Lake Victoria

Pollution resulting from mining activities is causing serious environmental problems on Lake Victoria, the state-owned 'Daily News' reported yesterday. AFP quoted the newspaper as saying mercury used by small-scale miners in areas along the lake shores was contaminating ground and surface water.

Nairobi 16 June, 1998 14:30 GMT

[ENDS]

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IRIN Update No. 440 for Central and Eastern Africa (Thursday 18 June 1998)

BURUNDI: CNDD-FDD says it will back deal guaranteeing democracy "for all"

The main CNDD rebel group, and its armed wing - Forces pour la defense de la democratie (FDD) - are ready to accept any peace solution found at the current all-party talks in Arusha as long as the deal guarantees CNDD-FDD objectives for "security and democracy for all", the organisation's spokesperson Jerome Ndiho said in a press release received by IRIN today (Thursday). He declared that CNDD-FDD was not invited to the Arusha peace talks and warned against "those who continue to conclude agreements in the name of CNDD".

Leonard Nyangoma has attended the Arusha talks as CNDD (Conseil national pour la defense de la democratie) president despite the announcement by the movement in May that he had been suspended and replaced by Jean-Bosco Ndayikengurukiye, formerly CNDD's chief-of-staff. Informed sources told IRIN the CNDD split could be crucial to the success of attempts by mediator Julius Nyerere to persuade all factions to agree a ceasefire.

Meanwhile, the leader-in-exile of FRODEBU (Front pour la democratie au Burundi) Jean Minani has called for "unconditional" talks to end armed struggle, Burundi radio reported yesterday (Wednesday). Minani, who was at first opposed to a recent "partnership" deal between his party and the Burundian government, said that as negotiations were in progress and as "everybody was committed to finding a solution" the armed struggle was no longer justified.

UGANDA: Insecurity hinders humanitarian activities

The recent upsurge of rebel activities has led to a significant reduction and, in some cases, suspension of relief activities, including emergency food distributions, in northern and western Uganda, WFP reported in its weekly emergency report. Humanitarian sources told IRIN today that some humanitarian organisations had relocated their staff from the field, notably from the Kitgum region. They added that extra security measures had been taken, but no general suspension or withdrawal was being considered for the time being. Meanwhile, Kitgum itself is reported to be calm.

Soldiers arrested after rebel attack

More than 20 soldiers have been arrested in relation with the rebel attack on a technical college in Kabarole, in western Uganda in which at least 48 people, mainly students, died, AFP reported quoting the daily 'New Vision' newspaper. The soldiers, who were part of the army detachment guarding the college, reportedly deserted their positions when the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels attacked. The commanding officer of the detachment has also been arrested.

Kampala mayor released by US customs authorities

The mayor of Kampala, Haji Nasser Ntege Sebaggala, who was held by US customs at John Kennedy International Airport in New York on Saturday has been released, Ugandan radio reported. According to a statement issued by the minister for foreign affairs in Kampala, Sebaggala was released on Monday after the intervention of the Ugandan embassy and the permanent mission of Uganda to the UN.

RWANDA: Government grants importers tax breaks

Rwanda has decided to exempt local importers of heavy and light trucks from paying import duties for one year as a strategy of revitalising the war-torn transport sector, the Rwandan news agency reported. It said a notice issued by the commissioner of customs on 11 June declared all customs collectors had been instructed that "all lorries and trailers, pickups, buses and bulldozers were exempted with immediate effect from paying import duty".

KENYA: East African-US military exercises begin

A joint military exercise between East African and US troops was launched yesterday in Lodwar, Turkana District, the 'Daily Nation' reported. It said more than 100 Kenyan and US paratroopers began the operation with a drop from a US C130 military transport plane about 10 km from the town. They were welcomed by Kenya's Chief of Staff General Daudi Tonje and his counterparts in the Ugandan and Tanzanian armed forces, Alhaji Abubakar Jeje Odongo and Robert Mboma respectively.

SUDAN: "Partial ceasefire" proposal

A "partial ceasefire" is one of the proposals being tabled in a two-day meeting of 16 nations on Sudan. Representatives of the government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) were also meeting present at the meeting in the Hague, news agencies reported. A British Foreign Office

spokesperson told IRIN today that the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Partners Forum meeting in the Dutch capital may consider suggestions of a "partial ceasefire" to allow for humanitarian relief to reach people in need in southern Sudan. Britain yesterday announced a new donation of $24.8 million for humanitarian relief in Sudan, two thirds of which is for WFP. IGAD is the sub-regional Horn of Africa grouping which leads the current Sudanese mediation process. Substantive talks were held in Nairobi in May, and follow-up meetings were planned for August in Addis Ababa.

Government claims successes in Blue Nile and Kassala provinces

A pro-government newspaper 'Alwan' yesterday claimed that government forces had killed 100 rebels and wounded 180 others in southeastern Blue Nile province, AFP reported from Khartoum. The report did not specify where the clash took place, but said "on the way to Kurmuk". Rebel-held Kurmuk is on the Ethiopian border. Two locations occupied by SPLA rebels in Kassala have been retaken by government forces, according to a provincial official quoted by the 'Akhbar Al-Youm' newspaper, AFP reported on Tuesday.

Clashes in western Sudan

Hundreds of people have been killed in clashes western Sudan between the Fur and Messelit ethnic groups, the governor of western Darfur province said on Wednesday. The governor, Ibrahim Abdel-Rahman told the 'Akhbar Al-Youm' newspaper that 235 people were killed and 43 injured recently. Thousands of other Sudanese are reported to have fled into neighbouring Chad to escape the fighting.

Britain details more funds

Britain said on Wednesday it was giving an extra $24.8 million to help victims of famine and fighting in Sudan. Reuters reported International Development Secretary Clare Short saying the move followed a recent reassessment by WFP which now believes 1.2 million people are in need of help.

TANZANIA: Dar es Salaam liberalises insurance industry

Tanzania has licensed the first private insurance company ending 31 years of state monopoly in the industry. Kenyan-based Jubilee Insurance Group was on Wednesday given a certificate allowing it to open a branch in the country, AFP quoted government officials as saying.

UNITED NATIONS: Holbrooke named new US ambassador to the United Nations

The United States has appointed Richard Holbrooke, the architect of the Dayton peace accords which ended the Bosnian war, as the country's new ambassador to the United Nations. Holbrooke, renowned for a "straight-talking, no-nonsense approach" to diplomacy, takes over from Bill Richardson. Richardson was recently appointed the new US Energy Secretary.

Nairobi, 18 June 1998 14:30 GMT

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IRIN Update No. 442 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 22-22 June 1998)

BURUNDI: Parties agree to "suspend hostilities"

After a week of closed-door meetings, delegations representing 17 Burundian factions at all-party talks in Arusha, northern Tanzania were reported yesterday (Sunday) to have agreed a "suspension of hostilities". A communique said the participants, brought together under the mediation of former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, had agreed "to bring an end to the constant cycle of violence and fratricidal killings which have afflicted Burundi for a long time".

The ceasefire is due to come into force before 20 July when detailed peace negotiations begin. Initial reaction to the agreement was cautiously optimistic. The European Union's special envoy Aldo Ajello said he was "very satisfied" with the deal. Washington's special envoy Howard Wolpe described it as "very positive" and said it represented an "encouraging start" to resolving the conflict.

Several parties note reservations

Seven of the 17 parties who signed the final declaration did so with reservations. A copy of the document, received by IRIN today (Monday), showed that representatives of the Burundian government, and the Tutsi-dominated UPRONA and PARENA parties were among those whose handwritten reservations accompany their signatures. A western diplomat present in Arusha conceded to IRIN today the talks concluded in some "confusion", as time was running out.

Three contentious points emerge from these reservations. One is mention of Arusha as the venue of the next round of talks on 20 July 1998. The Burundian government has hoped for some time to move the peace process away from Tanzania, accusing Tanzania of not being neutral. The second is the "suspension of hostilities" itself: the government, and some of its supporters, felt that the relevant clause should specify "armed factions" rather than "armed parties" in an attempt to distinguish the army from rebel movements.

The third common complaint was that no mention is made of lifting sanctions in the declaration.

EU Special Envoy Aldo Ajello told IRIN today that the issue of the description of the "armed parties" was "semantic" and that a suspension of hostilities, including the army, was firmly agreed. According to Ajello's information, even the breakaway CNDD-FDD faction would not obstruct the agreement, he said, although they were not represented in Arusha. Ajello said he thought it likely that sanctions against Burundi could be suspended by regional heads of state if the next round of peace talks started and began to "make progress." He said the tone of the talks in general was "amazing", given the previous lack of communication between the parties, and that the progress made was "more than everyone expected".

UGANDA: Rebels abduct schoolgirls

Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels kidnapped 39 girls at a school in the northern Ugandan district of Kitgum in a night raid over the weekend, AFP reported today. The raid on Saint Charles Lwanga secondary school at Kalongo was confirmed by Major General Salim Saleh, a defence ministry aide to President Yoweri Museveni. Last week, UN Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict Olara Otunnu visited both Khartoum and Kampala and said the Sudanese government had pledged to help obtain the release of children abducted from Uganda and reportedly held by the LRA at its base camps across the border in Sudan. Meanwhile, on Saturday, Reuters reported that three Ugandan children abducted more than one year ago had been released.

SUDAN: Eritrea denies it launched cross-border attack

Eritrea has denied claims by Sudanese state media that it was responsible for attacks on seven positions in eastern Sudan last week. A spokesman at the Eritrean embassy in Nairobi told IRIN that Eritrean support for Sudanese rebels was "moral and political" only. He also denied reports in the Khartoum media that Eritrean forces were reclaiming tanks "borrowed" by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC): Kabila sets up reconstruction fund

The DRC has set up a special fund as part of the country's planned multi-billion-dollar reconstruction programme, Reuters reported government spokesman Didier Mumengi as saying on Saturday. He added that ministers had agreed to contribute 10 percent of their monthly salaries from the end of June to the fund.

Meanwhile, President Laurent-Desire Kabila has said he wants a strong and stable currency for the country and the introduction on 30 June of a new Congolese Franc could be a step towards that. Last Thursday, the central bank governor presented Kabila with an album containing samples of the new monetary unit, Congolese television reported. "It is undeniable that a strong and stable currency will attract private investment from inside and outside the country. I'm convinced the Congolese Franc will be a fundamental asset for starting and accompanying the process of national reconstruction," Kabila was quoted as saying.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: Electoral commission sworn in

Members of the independent electoral commission CEMI (Commission electorale mixte independante) were sworn in on Thursday, AFP reported. The 53-member CEMI is responsible for organising and supervising parliamentary elections scheduled for August-September this year. One of its most important tasks is revise electoral lists and set definitive election dates. President of the Commission Michel Adama-Tamboux, who was nominated at end-May, is supported by two vice-presidents, one nominated by the government and the other by the G-11 group of opposition parties.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Government reaches deal with donors

The Congolese government clinched a deal with international donors in Washington last week on a reconstruction programme for the country, AFP reported yesterday. The agency quoted Congolese Finance Minister Mathias Dzon as saying that donors had agreed to contribute US $ 95 million while the government itself would put in US $ 145 million. The reconstruction programme for 1998 aims to rebuild the war-devastated capital and

reestablish government administration and the education and health sectors.

KENYA: Two soldiers killed

Two soldiers - one US serviceman and one Tanzanian - who were taking part in a joint military exercise in Lodwar have died in separate incidents, the 'EastAfrican' reported today. The American, Dave Thuma, died of a heart attack while jogging with his colleagues last week while the Tanzanian, whose name could not be established immediately, died in a road accident on the Nakuru-Eldoret road in the Rift Valley.

More than 2,200 soldiers drawn from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, backed up by 375 US special troops, are taking part in the exercise. The purpose is to try and train a regional force which can deal with peacekeeping missions.

Military chiefs from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda visited the training camps last week accompanied by US ambassador to Kenya Prudence Bushnell. The envoy said it was important for African countries to have a force which can respond to peacekeeping calls on the continent.

Meanwhile, East African defence ministers - Gideon Ndambuki of Kenya, Edgar Majogo of Tanzania, and Amama Mbabazi of Uganda - signed a status of forces agreement on 18 June. This is intended to regulate the legal status of member states' defence forces within the East African Cooperation (EAC) regional grouping.

Nairobi, 22 June 1998 14:00 GMT

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IRIN Update No. 443 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 23 June 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Museveni and Kagame yet to confirm COMESA attendance

As ministers from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) countries gather in Kinshasa this week to prepare for next week's 29-30 June summit, local media reports say Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame have still not confirmed their attendance. This has raised fears the two leaders, previously close allies of DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila, will once again boycott a regional gathering in Kinshasa. Both Kagame and Museveni are reportedly displeased with the DRC army's handling of the security situation in the volatile eastern part of the country. Meanwhile, other delegations have arrived in Kinshasa ahead of the summit.

Diplomatic sources told IRIN today (Tuesday) an invitation had been sent directly to Kagame from the DRC government and it was thought he would attend. "It's time to put the political wrangling behind us otherwise it, just damages the sub-region," a well-placed Rwandan source said.

Diplomats in the DRC capital said that although the COMESA summit differed from a regional security summit proposed by DRC in May, in terms of attendance it was still of enormous significance for the DRC leadership's credibility. The COMESA meeting is intended to coincide with the launch by Kabila of a new Congolese Franc and independence festivities on 30 June.

WHO details number of river blindness sufferers

WHO says over 18 million people out of a population of more than 48.5 million are exposed to river blindness in DRC. Of these 41,990 are completely blind and some 5.2 million are infected. The most severely affected areas are the provinces of Kasai, Bas Congo, Equateur, and Province Orientale where the inhabitants of entire villages are blind.

WHO warns the disease threatens to slow down socio-economic activity in rural communities where it has taken hold. According to a WHO report, the situation is worsening because no systematic action has been taken to combat the disease and also because living conditions are not improving.

Meanwhile, a cholera epidemic in four provinces is not as "dramatic" as earlier in the year, WHO said. The epidemic has been contained in Katanga province, although there is still some concern over the situation in North and South Kivu and in Province Orientale, it added.

UN rights report to be published on 29 June

A UN human rights report on DRC is to be published on 29 June, the spokesman of the Secretary-General said yesterday (Monday). Fred Eckhard told the daily news briefing in New York Atsu-Koffi Amega, head of the team which drew up the report, had been asked to come to headquarters just ahead of the release date and arrangements were in hand for him to be at the briefing on 29 June. On that same day, the Security Council was expected to get its copy and probably would receive on the same day commentaries from the governments of Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda - both of which had been given advance copies of the report. The report would not be changed in any way as a result of their review of it, Eckhard added.

BURUNDI: Annan welcomes Arusha deal

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has welcomed the weekend deal at all-party peace talks in Arusha on a "suspension of hostilities" in Burundi. A statement issued by the UN's New York headquarters said the deal had generated hope in the peace process and congratulated all participants at the talks mediated by ex-Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere.

"The Secretary-General urges all the parties and signatories to the Arusha declaration of 21 June to strictly and fully implement their commitment to a cessation of hostilities with a view to establishing a favourable environment for the substantive negotiations scheduled to commence on 20 July at Arusha," the statement said.

Meanwhile, Burundi called yesterday for sanctions against the country to be lifted. AFP reported that Communications Minister and government spokesman Luc Rukingama had deplored the fact the Arusha accord made no mention of lifting the sanctions, which he described as an "essential" part of the week-long negotiations in Arusha. "The economic sanctions should be lifted rapidly for reasons of coherence and honesty," he was quoted as saying.

In a separate development, Reuters quoted a senior Burundi army official as saying his troops would continue normal military operations against Hutu rebels despite the Arusha deal. "We don't agree to the truce," Lieutenant-Colonel Longin Minani was quoted as telling the news agency by telephone. "The Burundi government cannot declare a truce because it is not attacking anybody. Our job is to protect the population and we will continue doing that."

RWANDA: Priests call for Church probe of genocide

Rwanda priests have called for the creation of an independent commission to examine the role played by clergymen in the 1994 genocide, the private Rwandan news agency ARI reported at the weekend. In a statement issued at the end of a APRERWA (Assemblee de pretres rwandais) meeting, the priests recommended that a Church commission examine the alleged role of priests and other clergymen in the genocide. The priests want clergymen suspected to have participated in the genocide to be charged and if found guilty, be punished according to the "ecclesiastic penal code".

Rwanda genocide survivors demand death penalty against rebels

Meanwhile, an organisation of genocide survivors wants captured Hutu rebels to be sentenced to death "to discourage people from collaborating with them," AFP reported. It said the organisation argued this would prompt a positive response, like the April public execution of 22 people found guilty of genocide, which made other detainees on similar charges confess.

School bus attack leaves 18 dead, 40 wounded in Rwanda

An attack on a school bus in western Rwanda left 18 dead and 40 wounded, mostly children, AFP reported today. Quoting "several sources", it said the attack occurred on Monday afternoon in Kivumu on the road to Kibuye town about 100 km west of Kigali. AFP reported a district official as confirming the attack. "The school bus was attacked carrying children and adults, but mainly children, which explains why they are a majority among the wounded," he was quoted as saying.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: Annan recommends extension of MINURCA's mandate

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has recommended the extension to 15 September 1998 of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Central African Republic (MINURCA), his spokesman Fred Eckhard said yesterday. Annan also said that if the necessary preparations for elections were made before the mandate expired, he would be prepared to submit detailed recommendations to the Security Council on possible UN involvement in the electoral process. MINURCA which is assisting in maintaining security in Bangui and its surroundings, is providing technical assistance to national election bodies.

KENYA: US trade mission to Africa

US Commerce Secretary William Daley will lead an eight-day business development mission to Kenya, Ivory Coast and South Africa accompanied by 30 executives to promote US trade and investment in Africa, the US embassy in Nairobi told IRIN. The embassy quoted Daley as saying the three countries were chosen "because they very much want to attract foreign investment and trade."

Daley says Kenya now hosts 75 American companies who have business interests in the East African region."Kenya has become a strong market for American goods and services. Our exports to Kenya jumped from around $100 million in 1996 to $225 million last year," he was quoted as telling an audience of congressmen, ambassadors and business executives in Washington on Thursday.

UGANDA: Abducted children released

Three children, abducted by Ugandan rebels operating in the north of the country, were released at the weekend and handed over to the United Nations in Khartoum. The Sudanese government secured their release after a three-day visit to Sudan by Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict Olara Otunnu. Arrangements are being made to return the children to Uganda.

Nairobi, 23 June 1998 15:30 GMT

[ENDS]

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IRIN Update No. 444 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 24 June 1998)

RWANDA: Amnesty says killings of unarmed civilians continue

Amnesty International has accused the Rwandan government and opposition groups of "deliberate killings of thousands of unarmed civilians." The human rights watchdog said in a report released today (Wednesday) that in the last few months, the number of "disappearances in Rwanda has reached such a level that many families no longer let the authorities know that their relatives have disappeared."

The organisation said the report was based on research done in Rwanda earlier this year which revealed a dramatic escalation of the number of people killed or "disappeared". It warned that unless the government took immediate action, the violence would become an inevitable part of life in Rwanda. According to the report, these incidents started in 1996 when many former refugees returned to Rwanda.

The 50-page report includes a set of recommendations to the Rwandese authorities and armed opposition groups operating in Rwanda, aimed at preventing further "disappearances", extrajudicial executions and develiberate and arbitrary killings of civilians.

The report alleged the Rwandan Patriotic Army had made mass arrests in northwest part of the country which resulted in "large-scale disappearances." It said people were detained in military camps which were not accessible to visitors. (www.amnesty.org)

UGANDA: WFP resume food distribution in Gulu

WFP says it has resumed food distribution to 324,000 displaced people in Uganda's northern district of Gulu where government troops are battling Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels. The organisation's latest weekly emergency report said security in the area was poor and traffic along the Gulu/Kitgum road required a military escort. The report said the military had been escorting food convoys travelling from Gulu to Pekelle. Movements outside Kitgum town are restricted and some international NGOs have temporarily relocated their staff from the area, it added. Meanwhile, AFP reported today that security forces in northern Uganda had captured the bodyguard of LRA leader Joseph Kony. The 18-year-old man, whose name was given only as Richard, was arrested in the town of Gulu last week.

AFP also reported today that Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni launched a stinging attack on his country's armed forces, accusing them of laziness and failing to protect civilians from rebel attacks. Quoting the state-owned New Vision newspaper, AFP reported Museveni was speaking on Tuesday during a visit to Kichwamba Technical Institute. Another rebel group, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), attacked the school in western Uganda earlier this month, killing at least 45 people, mainly students.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: MDM goes public over aid worker's detention

A Medecins du monde (MDM) aid worker has been detained in DRC since the beginning of May without being charged, the French NGO MDM said today in a press release. Fabrice Michalon was arrested in Goma on 4 May and transferred the following day to Kinshasa where he is detained at the premises of the ANR (Agence nationale de renseignement). He was arrested for "identification" purposes, but the DRC authorities never detailed any official charges against him, MDM said.

An MDM spokesman told IRIN today that MDM had hoped to solve the case without making it public, but after two months of fruitless negotiations they had now decided to denounce his arbitrary arrest. Since the arrest of their staff member, MDM has suspended its operations in DRC which consisted of assistance to local health structures in North Kivu and a development programme in Mbuji-Mayi, Kasai Oriental province.

Five journalists reported released

Meanwhile, RFI reported yesterday that DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila had ordered the release of five journalists. Three of them, including two journalists of the satirical paper "Le Pot Pourri", were released later that day. This announcement comes after a local press meeting organised in Kinshasa last Friday. At the end of the meeting, participating editors and journalists had invited the DRC president to guarantee freedom of expression, the state news agency ACP reported.

Unpredictable and fragile humanitarian situation in Province Orientale

The accumulation of social, economic and sanitary problems in Province Orientale, in eastern DRC, has contributed to a very unpredictable and fragile humanitarian situation, according to a joint OCHA/UNDP report. The report, based on an inter-agency field mission, underlined that Province Orientale had suffered over the two last years from floods, epidemics, and the 1996-97 civil conflict. The latter resulted in a large refugee influx and internal population displacement.

Infrastructure and state services are in decay with less than 10 percent of the rural population having access to drinkable water. The report also said that the variety of health problems encountered was "making it a public health laboratory". Several cholera epidemics were reported in 1998, in Kapalata camp near Kisangani and in Ituri, along the Ugandan border. Polio, meningitis, measles and suspected monkey-pox were also reported.

AID: Budgets in decline

"Humanitarian aid does make a difference" is the message relief agencies should concentrate on, according to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Federation's annual 'World Disasters Report', released today, notes a decline in humanitarian funding of 17 percent between 1992 and 1996. Humanitarian agencies are in a dilemma, the report states. On one hand, "engaged in policy dialogue, public awareness and conflict resolution", agencies are also "...worrying about their independence. Integrating aid into political and military strategies may destroy their neutrality and impartiality, and may well undermine the credibility of agencies motivated by solidarity or justice", the report claims. (http://www.ifrc.org)

The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in its preliminary annual review of 1997 aid flows released last week, also notes a "disturbing trend" of decline. Official development assistance in 1997 reached the lowest level ever, as a percentage of the combined gross national product of donors. Sub-Saharan Africa received an average of US $27 per head in aid during 1997, and US $3 per head of foreign direct

investment. Latin America and the Caribbean, by comparison, received per capita US $13 of aid and US $62 of investment. Members of the G-7 industrialised nations spend an average of only 0.19 percent of their GNP as aid, the OECD reports. (http://www.oecd.org)

HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES: Officials warn of increasing security risks

Top officials from UNHCR and the ICRC have warned that humanitarian operations in many parts of the world were facing "unacceptable security risks". The comments were made in a press communique issued on Monday after the two agencies had assembled many of their top officials in Geneva to discuss how to provide a more secure environment for humanitarian operations.

The communique said the risks to the work of UNHCR and ICRC came from the changed nature of armed conflict today, and especially from the proliferation of undisciplined armed groups. Many humanitarian operations are taking place in areas where law and order has broken down completely and organised crime and banditry threaten relief efforts.

The result is a threat both to the integrity of humanitarian operations and to the aid workers themselves. "Unfortunately, the people who brave danger and hardship trying to help others, more and more frequently become victims of violence themselves. There must be a limit to how much we can take," said Sadako Ogata, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga insisted on the urgent need to strengthen respect for international humanitarian law. "Particularly, the civilian population is now often the target of military operations," he said. "This is unacceptable."

Over the past six years, 139 UN civilian workers have been killed in the course of duty and 141 taken hostage. Over the past five years alone, 30 ICRC staff were killed.

Nairobi, 24 June 1998 15:00 GMT

[ENDS]

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IRIN Update No. 446 for Central and Eastern Africa (Friday 26 June 1998)

SUDAN: UN receives clearance for increase in airlift capacity

WFP announced today (Friday) that the Sudanese government had approved a total of 12 cargo aircraft for relief operations. WFP told IRIN that it currently has four C-130 aircraft operating into southern Sudan. A fifth aircraft, delayed due to a worldwide lack of specialised air-drop equipment, is due to start work on Monday, a WFP spokeswoman said. The four Hercules have not performed as well as expected this month. "We never thought we'd have so much downtime with mechanical problems," a spokeswoman said, adding that WFP expected 4,500 mt of a targeted 6,500 mt of food aid for 930,000 people would be delivered by the end of the month.

The new Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) estimates of southern Sudanese in need of food total 1.2 million people between the following areas: Bahr al-Ghazal: 701,000; Western Upper Nile 162,000; Eastern Equatoria 182,000; Jonglei: 181,000. These figures do not include displaced and other vulnerable people in southern government-held areas. In the whole of Sudan, about 2.6 million people are estimated to need food aid assistance.

New nutritional data confirms serious food situation

While major logistical operations continue to contain the southern Sudan food emergency, new figures confirm that hunger is still severe in many parts of the war- and drought-hit region. MSF's latest nutritional surveys in Bahr al-Ghazal (Tonj county) and Western Upper Nile showed overall malnutrition rates of 32.5 percent (using the weight for height method). MSF's latest update says that the situation "is not improving" and that they are registering more children in their feeding centres and planning new centres to cope with the needs.

Splits within pro-government Sudanese groups, rebels

Two former rebel soldiers were shot dead in Khartoum on Wednesday, reports the German press agency DPA. Quoting the 'Akhbar al-Yom' newspaper, the report states that pro-government southern factions have been instructed to disarm their members in Khartoum. A captain in the pro-government South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF) ordered his men to shoot two men who resisted disarmament. The report links the incident to a recent attack on the house of the governor of northern Bahr al-Ghazal, Kawac Makuei, another defector from the SPLA.

The All Africa News Agency, in a report on Monday, claimed that the rebel umbrella organization, the National Democratic Alliance was also suffering from strains between its southern and northern partners. The AANA describes the rebel coalition as "fragile at best" and mentions the northeastern conflict zones as being areas of tension between the different rebel groups.

BURUNDI: CNDD-FDD faction says Arusha agreement "totally unrealistic"

The breakaway military faction of the rebel Burundian Conseil national pour la defense de la democratie (CNDD), the so-called CNDD-FDD, has rubbished the agreement reached in Arusha last weekend as "a dream", according to AFP. Jerome Ndiho, spokesman for the CNDD-FDD in Brussels, said that "the two main belligerents, Buyoya's army and the FDD, consider the agreement does not concern them, which means that the Arusha accord is worth nothing." The government delegation at Arusha had excused themselves from a suspension of hostilities as they were not an "armed factions".

CONGO-ANGOLA: Security talks on Congo-Cabinda border

The Governor of Angola's Cabinda enclave, Jose Amaro Tati, recently visited the Kouilou and Niari areas of southern Congo (Brazzaville) to talk with the leaders of the two regions about security measures in common border areas, 'La Semaine Africaine' weekly newspaper reported on 25 June. The "delicate question" of Cabindan refugees in Pointe Noire was also discussed, the newspaper reported. There are some 20,000 refugees from Cabinda presently in Kouilou. A joint communique issued at the end of the visit noted the "excellent relations" that exist between Cabinda and the Congo, according to the newspaper, adding that similar talks are scheduled in July.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: More refugees arrive from Angola

A total of some 17,000 Angolan refugees have now arrived in DRC and a further 3,000 people are believed to be on the way, UN humanitarian sources told IRIN today. They said there were now some 13,000 Angolans around Dilolo in Katanga most of whom had crossed over from Luau, a further 1,300 people in Kulindji and another 2,700 scattered around Kahemba district. "In total, we are looking at around 20,000 refugees as it is sure there are 3,000 more on the road," said one source. The refugees are fleeing an upsurge in fighting between government troops and those of the former UNITA rebel movement.

UGANDA: Rebel group abduct passengers

Fifteen people were abducted in an ambush on a passenger bus by a small rebel group in northern Uganda, the state-owned 'New Vision' reported today. The Uganda National Rescue Front II (UNRF-2) rebels looted and torched the vehicle which was travelling on a road parallel to Uganda's northwest border with Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo on Wednesday.

The paper says the abduction brought to 200 the number of people abducted by rebels in recent months, including children. The UNRF-2 was formed in 1996 after breaking from the West Nile Bank Front and is headed by a former soldier of the deposed dictator Idi Amin. The two most active rebel groups in Uganda are the Lord's Resistance Army in the north and the Allied Democratic Forces in the west.

Non-governmental organisations free to meet rebel groups

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni has ruled out talking to the rebel groups. But lawmakers, church leaders and human rights groups are planning to meet in the northern town of Gulu to discuss how to approach the rebels for talks, AP reported yesterday (Thursday). The president's press secretary Hope Kivengere told IRIN today that non-governmental organisations are free to talk to the rebels.

HUMAN RIGHTS: UN Secretary-General appeals for eradication of torture

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appealed to governments and civil society to take action to defeat torture and torturers. In his message released today to mark the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Annan said over 100 states have ratified the Convention against Torture, which came into force 11 years ago. He said that while many national Constitutions, criminal codes, laws and regulations proclaim the prohibition of torture, the practice is still reported. Annan said over a decade after the Convention against Torture came into force, the international community has realized the need to place a further spotlight on this atrocious phenomenon.

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IRIN Update No. 447 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 27-29 June 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: COMESA summit kicks off

Six African heads of state have arrived in Kinshasa for the opening today (Monday) of the annual conference of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The meeting takes place under a cloud of debt and lack of investment in the region. Reuters reported state radio as saying the main focus of the summit would likely be on free trade, transport, communications and investment. It added that President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, President Sam Njoma of Namibia, President Pierre Buyoya of Burundi, President Bakili Muluzi of Malawi and Kenya's President Daniel arap Moi would all attend the meeting. A first deputy prime minister from Uganda and a senior minister from Swaziland were also due to take part in the one-day conference.

Burundi appeals for summit support on ending sanctions

Burundi radio reported yesterday (Sunday) that Bujumbura had appealed to countries attending the COMESA summit to work for the lifting of sanctions imposed by regional states following the coup that brought Buyoya to power. "The Burundian people have suffered long enough from the consequences of the embargo. Moreover the Burundian government believes it has done everything in its power to bring about the lifting of the embargo and urges the COMESA summit to bear witness to this," the radio quoted a government statement as saying. On Saturday, Buyoya launched a book entitled "Mission Possible", arguing that reconciliation between Burundians was a "difficult but possible task".

Meanwhile, Tanzania says it is losing more than US $7 million a year due to the economic sanctions imposed on neighbouring Burundi. Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Emmanuel Mwambulukutu told parliament last week that the loss was due to suspension of trade between landlocked Burundi and a number of government agencies, state-owned Radio Tanzania reported. But Mwambulukutu ruled out unilateral lifting of the sanctions by Tanzania.

Publication of UN rights report delayed by one day

The official publication of a UN report into human rights violations in the former Zaire has been delayed one day until tomorrow (Tuesday), a UN spokesman told IRIN. The report, which was originally scheduled to be released today, was compiled by a team of human rights experts who visited DRC earlier this year. After spending many fruitless months in the country, the investigative team was finally pulled out last April with the UN alleging numerous obstacles had been placed in its way and prevented it from properly fulfilling its mandate.

RWANDA: IMF approves three-year ESAF credit for Rwanda

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved a three-year loan for Rwanda amounting to US $95 million under the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF). The IMF said in a statement released last week that the money was in support of the government's economic programme which began in April this year and runs to March 2001. The first annual loan of US $32 million is available in two equal semi-annual installments.

The multilateral lending agency said since the end of the country's civil war in 1994, Rwanda has made substantial progress in rebuilding its severely-damaged infrastructure. It added that most of the internally-displaced people have been settled, the country has made progress in rebuilding its capacity for management, restored macroeconomic stability and initiated key structural reforms. But the IMF said Rwanda's administrative and institutional capacity in the public sector remained weak. It said to ensure sustained human resource development, higher social expenditure would be needed, and increased amounts of concessional external assistance and more flexible donor commitments would be required over the long term.

OAU names chairman of genocide panel

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) has named former Botswanan President HE Sir Ketumile Masire as chairman of a seven-person panel to investigate the causes of the 1994 genocide. OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim rejected suggestions the OAU probe was too late, saying the aim was to draw lessons from the tragedy, not to apportion blame and ensure no such thing ever happened again.

Meanwhile, Radio Rwanda reported on Saturday that two former soldiers accused of genocide had appeared in court. It said Peter Bizimana and Alois Mazimpaka, were are accused of having killed several people in Butare, appeared on Friday in Butare court. The prosecution requested the death penalty. The case was adjourned until 27 July.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: ADB gives US $500,000 for health services

The African Development Bank (ADB) has announced it was giving Congo Republic US $500,000 in emergency aid to improve health facilities in the war-ruined capital Brazzaville. The money will be used for basic health care, to renovate and equip health centres and support vaccination programmes.

Four killed in explosion

Three children and one adult were killed last week while handling explosive devices in Brazzaville, local media reported on Saturday. The children were playing with an unspecified device when it blew up early in the week in Quenze district, Radio Congo said in a report monitored by AFP in Kinshasa. Meanwhile, Radio Liberte said one person was killed and three others were seriously injured in another explosion in Poto-Poto when they were trying to disarm an explosive device.

UGANDA: South Africans urged to invest

South African Democratic Party leader Tony Leon has urged his country's business community to invest in Uganda, which he said had a tax policy favourable to foreign investors. "I would certainly encourage people to come here ... I would say come and see a country which is trying to implement the one economic system which, warts and all, has been proven to encourage economic growth," Leon was quoted as saying by AFP on Saturday at the end of a three-day visit to Uganda. Leon said low corporate tax, the absence of foreign exchange controls and an "extremely

flexible" labour market made Uganda a viable investment destination.

US $70 million lost in graft - report

The latest annual report of the auditor general says Uganda "lost" about US $69.6 million or 7.6 percent of Ugandan public expenditure from the treasury, the weekly 'EastAfrican' reported today. The paper quoted the report as saying the funds were lost through unauthorised cash withdrawals and unaccounted for and incorrect expenditures. Total government expenditure in the year ending June last year was US $913.4 million. The auditor general's annual report is considered the best indicator of corruption in government departments, the weekly newspaper said. Meanwhile, donor countries have resolved to take a firmer stand on accountability for all funds disbursed after the Japanese government demanded a refund of US $2 million allegedly stolen by Ugandan government officials.

AFRICA: Some parts of Africa show one in four people infected with AIDS virus

In certain areas of Africa, one in four adults are now infected with the virus which causes full-blooded AIDS, according to a UN report issued in Geneva. It said individual country analysis showed that out of the 30 million people infected worldwide, 21 million were in Africa.

The UNAIDS report, released ahead of the 12th International AIDS Conference which started yesterday in Geneva, said there was however a slowing of infection rates in Uganda, Tanzania, Senegal and Thailand as a result of strong prevention programmes adopted by those countries.

But the report warned that South Africa, Namibia and other African countries could soon reach a 25 percent adult infection rate unless leaders undertook similar measures. It said the majority of infected Africans would die from AIDS because their countries could not afford the costly combination of drugs that have helped keep the virus in check among infected people in developed countries.

Nairobi, Monday 29 June 1998 14:00 GMT

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IRIN Update No. 448 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 30 June 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Kabila attacks "unfair" UN report

President Laurent-Desire Kabila has slammed a UN report on alleged human rights abuses, due to be handed to the Security Council today (Tuesday), as "full of lies and untrue statements". Speaking at the formal opening yesterday (Monday) of the annual conference of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Kabila appealed to the "entire African continent to reject with indignation and disgust" the report the UN is preparing to publish "on the so-called massacres perpetrated in the eastern part of our country".

The report, which was originally scheduled to be released yesterday, was compiled by a team of human rights experts who spent months in the country earlier this year before being withdrawn in April after acrimonious disputes with the government. The UN alleged numerous obstacles had been placed in its way by the government deliberately to hinder it from fulfilling its mandate. (IRIN Update 449 on Wednesday 1 July will carry key extracts from the report and the official responses of the DRC and Rwandan governments)

Chiluba calls for debt cancellation for COMESA members

Current COMESA chairman President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia called in his opening address for a debt cancellation for COMESA member states. Speaking in the DRC capital Kinshasa Chiluba said it was estimated that the total debt stock for the COMESA countries in 1996 was US $120 billion. "It's now universally accepted that without debt forgiveness, there is no way developing countries will be able to service their debts while at the same time have resources to invest in infrastructure," he said. Established in 1994, the COMESA is a regional grouping of 20 African states which have agreed to promote regional integration through trade development and common markets.

US expels three DRC diplomats

The US has ordered three of seven UN-accredited diplomats from DRC to leave New York because of debts incurred under the former government of Mobutu Sese Seko, Reuters quoted a US government official as saying on Monday. In turn, Congo's ambassador Andre Kapanga said that his government owed nothing since his new team came to New York last year and had promised to do its best to clear up the large debts left by Mobutu.

EU envoy's wife shot

Car thieves shot and wounded the wife of a senior European diplomat in Kinshasa on Friday night, news agencies reported. Helga Krebs, whose German husband Joachem has just finished a four-year tour as ambassador of the European Union, was wounded in the left leg. Diplomats said she was taken to a clinic and her life was not in danger. "Armed men in a mixture of uniforms and in civilian clothes held up the car and pulled Mrs Krebs out. They stole jewellery and watches from both the ambassador and his wife and made off with the car after shooting her in the left leg," a diplomatic source told Reuters.

BURUNDI: Army says 50 killed in weekend fighting

Burundi army officials said today that 50 people had been killed in heavy fighting between government and rebel troops at the weekend, three weeks away from a promised truce. Reuters reported army spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Mamert Sinarinzi as saying 49 rebels and one soldier were killed on Saturday during an army attack on a rebel position near Kiderege, about 95 km south of the capital Bujumbura. More than a dozen Burundian factions signed an agreement at all-party talks in Arusha earlier this month promising a truce ahead of a second round of talks on 20 July.

A western diplomat close to the Burundi peace process told IRIN today that he expected "a lot of jockeying for position" before the July 20 cessation of hostilities deadline. "They still have a few more weeks" he said, and that it was "too soon to say" if the Arusha deal was in trouble. Fighting around Bujumbura was reported even during the weekend when the Arusha talks closed, he added.

UGANDA: Army rescues abducted school girls

The Ugandan army has rescued 29 of the 39 school girls abducted by Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels nine days ago in northern Kitgum district. Army spokesman Captain Bantariza Shaban told IRIN today the girls were rescued on Sunday after combat with the rebels. "I am sure we shall find we rescued more of the girls because they scattered into the bush during our attack," he said. UNICEF representative in Uganda Michel Sidibe last week condemned the LRA "for callously targeting children".

Civil leaders appeal for dialogue with rebels

Religious and civic leaders ended a three-day meeting in Uganda's northern town of Gulu today with an appeal President Yoweri Museveni to open up negotiations with rebels, AFP reported. The 130 religious leaders and civic officials recommended in a statement released on Monday that the Ugandan government should open up dialogue and reconciliation with the main rebel groups. The LRA are active in the north and the Allied Democratic Forces in the west. A third group, known as Uganda Rescue Front II, has recently become active in the northwest.

Museveni has ruled out talking to the rebel groups, but the law makers, church leaders and human rights groups who met in Gulu say government-rebels dialogue is vital. The president's press secretary Hope Kivengere told IRIN civic leaders were free to talk to the rebels, but that the president would not be involved.

UNITED NATIONS: Impact of armed conflict on children draws UN concern

The UN Security Council on Monday condemned the targeting of children in armed conflicts and asked all states to prosecute those responsible for "grave breaches of international humanitarian law". After a day-long meeting on the issue, the Security Council said in a statement it intended to pay serious attention to the situation of children affected by armed conflicts by maintaining contact with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children in Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu. During his briefing to the Security Council, Otunnu said that an estimated quarter of a million children were serving in armed conflicts in some 50 countries and called for an end to "that abomination".

The UN said it would consider suitable responses whenever buildings or sites that usually have a significant number of children were specifically targeted. The Security Council said it would also support efforts to obtain commitments to stop the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts, and give special consideration to the disarmament and demobilisation of child soldiers. It said it would also support child-focused mine clearance and mine-awareness programmes.

TANZANIA: Donors grant funds for road repairs

Donors are to grant Tanzania some US $53.6 million to finance repair of major roads and bridges in various parts of the country, press reports said today. The World Bank will disburse some US $39.9 million as its general contribution and another US $11.7 million for emergency rehabilitation of major roads, the 'Guardian' newspaper reported. Much of Tanzania's transport infrastructure was severely damaged by the recent exceptionally-heavy 'El Nino' rains.

Nairobi, 30 June 1998 14:30 GMT

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N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 452 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 4-6 July 1998)

UGANDA: Army relocates base to eastern DRC

The Ugandan army has relocated its tactical headquarters in the west to neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo to try and wipe out rebels operating in the Ruwenzori mountains, the state-owned 'New Vision' reported on Saturday. It said the base had been moved from Kiraro in Kasese district to Ntabi in the DRC. Last week Ntabi, which served as rear base for Allied Democratic Forces rebels, was overrun by the Ugandan army although most of the rebels managed to flee.

Kony returns to Sudan

Joseph Kony, leader of another rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), has returned to his rear bases in Sudan after earlier entering Uganda, the 'Sunday Vision' reported. According to the paper, his group took with it several abductees, including five schoolgirls. The paper said the return to Sudan was due to "mounting pressure" by the Ugandan army. Meanwhile, the 'New Vision' today (Monday) reported that five Ugandan rebel groups had met in Khartoum to form a joint leadership. It said they included the LRA, the Ugandan National Rescue Front II (UNRF-2), the West Nile Bank Front, the ADF and a new group the former Uganda National Army (FUNA) which was reportedly launched last month.

74 deaths confirmed after clashes near Kenyan border

At least 74 people were confirmed dead after heavy fighting between ethnic communities inside Ugandan territory last week, Kenyan KTN television reported on Friday. It said violence broke out after Kenyan Pokot cattle raiders crossed into Ugandan territory and clashes ensued with Karamojong warriors there. West Pokot District Commissioner Nathan Hiribae was quoted as saying 36 "heavily-armed" Pokots and 38 Karamojong died. According to AFP, Kenyan Rift Valley Provicincial Commissioner Francis Baya said peace meetings would soon be convened between the two sides.

Over 2,000 homeless in flash floods

Flash flooding in Kyoga county of Lira district has left 2,200 homeless, according to a preliminary assessment by the local government. Disaster Preparedness Minister Paul Etiang has appealed for urgent food and shelter assistance. WFP told IRIN it was unknown to what extent non-food relief items were needed, but it was planning to send a month's supply pending a more in-depth evaluation.

EU to help relocate elephants

The EU has offered US $250,000 worth of assistance to Uganda to help flush out elephants disrupting the lives of residents in Luwero district, Ugandan radio reported. The aid will be used to relocate the elephants into national parks, Tourism Minister Brigadier Moses Ali was reported as saying. An expert from Zimbabwe is due in Uganda to help with the operation.

SUDAN: Alleged bomb suspects detained

The Sudanese interior ministry announced late Friday that those involved in a string of bomb attacks in Khartoum last week have been detained, AFP reported. According to the ministry, security officials rounded up a number of suspects and obtained full confessions. President Omar al-Bashir meanwhile has accused opposition members of being behind the attacks which targeted power and other vital installations. The Cairo branch of the Sudanese Human Rights Organisation (SHRO) issued a list of those it says are detained by the Khartoum authorities. They were questioned "about their opinion of the new constitution and their refusal to work within the governmental organisations". The SHRO called for the immediate release of detainees and for those accused to be brought to trial.

RWANDA: Government pledges to clear social security fund debt

The government has pledged to clear a debt of US $100 million owed to the national social security fund, the Rwanda News Agency reported. Labour Minister Dr Joseph Nsengimana made the announcement last week during a conference on the structural adjustment programme. RNA said the debt was inherited from the previous regime. During the conference, workers had attacked the government for endorsing a three-year economic reform programme without consulting their unions.

Kagame calls for non-ethnic democracy

On Saturday, Rwanda celebrated the fourth anniversary of Kigali's liberation with a call by Vice-President Paul Kagame to build a democracy "based on people and not on ethnicity". According to RNA, he condemned "those who want us to move backwards". At a rally, he called for "sweeping away the political dirt in our country". In his speech, President Pasteur Bizimungu took issue with corruption, laziness, incompetence, genocide ideology and the justice system. He said those "who think the liberation was carried out for them alone are wrong as are those who think the liberation does not concern them".

First part of French genocide probe concludes

The French parliamentary information mission on France's role in the 1994 genocide is to conclude the first part of its work, the French daily 'Liberation' said on Friday. Since March, the mission has heard 72 testimonies and received more than 20,000 documents, the daily added. In an interview with the newspaper, the mission's president and former defence minister Paul Quiles said they had "always obtained the requested documents - confidential and even secret". The mission had already acquired significant confidential information on French policy in Rwanda between 1990 and 1994.

Last week 'Liberation' quoted the historian Gerard Prunier as saying France had "contributed to the feasibility of the genocide" by being manipulated by the then- president Juvenal Habyarimana. Prunier described the genocide as the "ultimate failure" of France's African policy.

Nairobi, 6 July 1998, 14:30 gmt

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UNITEDNATIONS Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 453 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 7 July 1998)

UGANDA: Over 50 rebels said killed in government offensive

Over 50 rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) have been killed in a new army offensive to flush them from their hideouts in the Ruwenzori mountains, the state-owned 'New Vision' reported today (Tuesday). It said an unspecified number of civilian hostages had also been freed. The operation is led by acting army chief of staff Brigadier James Kazini who has moved his base from western Uganda to Ntabi just over the border in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The newspaper said 15 ADF camps had been destroyed last month.

Meanwhile, the Bundibugyo district commissioner told AFP an estimated 100 rebels overran Congolese troops at a camp in Kikura on Saturday, killing two people and abducting a number of others.

Repatriation of DRC refugees "smooth but slow"

The repatriation of 9,000 DRC refugees from Kyaka II settlement in western Uganda is going smoothly but slowly, due to bad weather and road conditions, a UNHCR spokesperson told IRIN today. The refugees have registered for voluntary repatriation, and 4,900 of them have already been repatriated to their home area, Kamango. UNHCR noted there was only one mountain road leading to Kamango situated in an enclave between Uganda and the Virunga park in North Kivu. The spokesperson said security had to be reinforced following rebel activities in Uganda's Kabarole district. According to an OCHA report on affected populations in the Great Lakes region, Uganda hosts some 188,573 refugees, including 161,500 Sudanese.

BURUNDI: 19 killed in rebel attacks

At least 19 people, including 10 rebels, have been killed in two separate rebel attacks in southern Burundi, state radio reported yesterday (Monday). An army spokesman was quoted as saying five civilians were killed in Makamba commune on Saturday, while four civilians were killed on "route nationale 3" when their minibus came under fire. In the first incident, security forces intervened killing some 10 rebels, the spokesman added. The violence comes after 17 sides in the Burundi conflict, including the government, signed an accord in Arusha last month pledging to cease hostilities from 20 July.

RWANDA: Bizimungu blames "colonial machinations" for killings

President Pasteur Bizimungu has blamed "colonial machinations" for the killings in his country, Tanzanian radio reported. Speaking at a dinner in Dar es Salaam, hosted by his Tanzanian counterpart President Benjamin Mkapa, he said Rwanda had however succeeded in bringing about social and economic development. Yesterday, he toured Dar es Salaam port and pledged to promote its use by his government and Rwandan businessmen, claiming the tariffs were "competitive". He was told by the port director that maritime traffic from Rwanda had dwindled significantly since 1993. Mkapa meanwhile expressed support for Rwanda's membership of the East African Cooperation which currently groups Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda.

Tanzania to arrest genocide suspects

In another development, Mkapa said Tanzania planned to arrest some genocide suspects after receiving a list from the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, AP reported. He told a news conference Tanzania was currently following legal procedures to carry out the arrests. "But be assured we will do it very soon," he said.

Rwanda to continue mediation in Horn conflict

Rwandan Foreign Minister Anastase Gasana has said his country will continue its mediation in the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict, but outside the OAU framework. Gasana told Reuters in Tanzania yesterday that Rwanda had pulled out of the OAU mediation committee after Eritrea rejected a US-Rwandan peace plan, adopted by the African body. "Since the OAU was going to pursue a resolution based along the same lines, (and) one of the key players rejected the recommendations, we felt it necessary to pull out," Gasana explained. He added that Rwanda had good relations with both countries and thus wanted to continue to help. Meanwhile, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni arrived in Asmara yesterday for talks with his Eritrean counterpart Isayas Afewerki. According to Eritrean radio, Isayas reiterated that the contentious border should be demarcated in accordance with colonial boundaries. Museveni is due in Addis Ababa today. A spokesman for the Eritrean community in Kenya told IRIN today that 30 Eritreans have been expelled by Ethiopia to Moyale, on the Kenyan border with Ethiopia, and "hundreds" more are fleeing to Kenya.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Anti-UN march in Kinshasa

Several thousand women marched through the centre of Kinshasa yesterday to protest against a UN report on massacres of Hutu refugees in DRC, according to news reports. The demonstration was organised by the ruling ADFL party and participants waved banners describing the UN as "slave-traders" and accusing the organisation of double standards for not investigating atrocities committed during the Mobutu era.

Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha last week claimed "certain countries or individuals" were using the UN negatively for their personal gain, the Agence congolaise de presse reported. Speaking in Mbuji Mayi, he affirmed the DRC, as a member of the UN, would not be manipulated in this way. He added that his country's relations with the UN were "trouble-free".

Self-proclaimed secessionist king arrested

A self-proclaimed king from Bas-Congo province has been arrested along with dozens of supporters, Reuters reported yesterday, citing government officials. "King" Bernard Mizele, who has called for the independence of Bas-Congo, Bandundu and Kinshasa provinces, was arrested at the weekend at Muanda in Bas-Congo. He had earlier fled Kinshasa after clashes broke out between his militia and government forces, in which eight people were killed. Military officials, quoted by Reuters, said Mizele's militiamen were surprisingly well-organised and they suspected support from ex-FAZ members.

SUDAN: Insecurity hampering assistance in south, MSF says

MSF has warned that insecurity in south Sudan is seriously hampering food deliveries urgently needed in the region. In a news release, received by IRIN today, the NGO said humanitarian agencies were forced to pull out of Western Upper Nile state on 29 June due to fighting in the area, leaving 751 children without life-saving supplementary and therapeutic food. Reports from Leer town indicated that a number of buildings had been burned to the ground and aid workers' compounds looted. MSF said peace was essential if humanitarian assistance was to prevent further starvation. Meanwhile, the German government announced yesterday it had earmarked US $1.4 million in aid for south Sudan.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: Elections slated for 20 September, decree still to be issued

The CAR electoral commission has proposed that parliamentary elections be held on 20 September and 11 October this year, but an observer in Bangui told IRIN today the dates were not yet official as a decree had to be issued by the government. He added that international assistance for the elections was currently under discussion. A decision on extending the mandate of the UN Mission to Central African Republic - which has been providing technical assistance to local electoral bodies - will be decided by the UN Security Council on 15 July.

AFRICA: Report stresses challenges of growing urbanisation

A new report by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) highlights the challenges of urban development. IFRC pointed out to IRIN that by 2025 it is estimated over half the African population will be living urban communities, and African urbanisation will have doubled since 1975. It warned that such growing urbanisation heralds potential disasters such as an increase in urban poverty, congestion, pollution, crumbling infrastructure, sprawling slums and more street children. The IFRC's 1998 World Disasters Report stresses that an often overlooked urban killer is traffic accidents, which by 2020 will be the third largest cause of death in the world. The report says all is not gloomy however if governments become more accountable to their citizens and take preventive measures for the future. [IFRC website for further information: www.ifrc.org]

Nairobi, 7 July 1998, 14:20 gmt

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IRIN Update 475 for 6 Aug 1998.8.6

U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 475 for Central and Eastern Africa (Thursday 6 August 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Fighting spreads as rebels make further gains

Uvira reportedly fell to the rebels today (Thursday), and fighting continued in DRC's third city Kisangani. In western DRC, the town of Muanda and the naval base of Banana were also said to be in rebel hands. Three planeloads of Rwandan soldiers had landed at the nearby military base of Kitona, according to Interior Minister Gaetan Kakudji. Human rights organisations expressed concern over the persecution of Banyamulenge and other ethnic Tutsis in Kinshasa, and diplomatic sources told IRIN the authorities had voiced doubt over their ability to protect Tutsis in the city.

Meanwhile, former foreign minister Bizima Karaha was today appointed deputy leader of the rebel group seeking to oust President Laurent-Desire Kabila, Rwandan radio reported. Opposition politician Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma was yesterday named to head the rebel movement. [For more details, refer to two separate IRIN items filed today headlined respectively "Fighting in Kisangani, Uvira under rebel control" and "Fighting spreads, Karaha appointed rebellion's deputy leader"].

Rebel leaders meet in Bukavu

Rebel leaders met in Bukavu today after which the movement's spokesman Maitre Mudumbi explained the rebellion was aimed at "correcting Kabila's mistakes and uniting the Congolese people". The Rwanda News Agency said he told local radio 'Maendeleo' the meeting comprised political, military and civil society representatives from Kindu, Goma, Bukavu and "other liberated regions". The rebel movement had not yet selected its headquarters, he said, but would do so soon. He denied the rebellion was aimed at "annexing parts of Congo to a country".

"Prepare for long war" Kabila says

In his first comments since the rebellion started, Kabila told the Congolese people to "prepare for a long war". At a news conference in Kinshasa, he accused Rwanda of waging war against his country. He said he would ask Rwanda at a weekend summit in Zimbabwe to withdraw its troops, Reuters reported.

Uganda says it has no role in the rebellion

President Yoweri Museveni's press secretary Hope Kivengere said she could not confirm the Ugandan leader's attendance at the regional summit on the DRC to be held in Zimbabwe over the weekend. She told IRIN that Museveni was currently in Kasese to assess the security situation in the western region. She said that Kampala was "very concerned" about developments in the DRC and denied that Uganda was involved in the rebellion. Kivengere said that Kampala was "not disappointed" with Kabila's cooperation to stamp out Ugandan rebel bases in DRC's eastern region. She expressed appreciation regarding the difficulty in bringing a country as vast as the DRC under control.

Banyamulenge soldiers flee to Zambia

More than 100 Banyamulenge soldiers have fled into Zambia to escape the fighting in the DRC, Zambian Defence Minister Chitalu Sampa said today. He told the South African news agency SAPA that the soldiers had arrived in Zambia on Tuesday night. They were disarmed and are being held at various police stations on the Copperbelt. SAPA quoted the Banyamulenge commander, Captain Jerome Tambwa, as saying they ran for the border when four of his men were killed and six had their eyes gouged out by Congolese troops. "We feared more retributions from other Congolese nationals."

He said the fighting in eastern DRC was sparked by discriminatory promotions based on ethnicity. "We felt marginalised," he added. One of his men, speaking through an interpreter in Kitwe, said they would appeal to the Zambian government to send them to Rwanda.

RWANDA: Former judge sentenced to death for genocide

A former judge has been sentenced to death for genocide and crimes against humanity by a court in Gitarama, central Rwanda, state radio said today. Josephine Mukanyangezi was accused of killings in the Kigali commune of Kicukiro. She is the sister of genocide suspect Obed Ruzindana who is under detention in Arusha.

Genocide survivors protest

State radio reported that some 200 genocide survivors demonstrated in the southern province of Butare yesterday over the release of genocide suspect Haji Rwicaninyoni Ibrahim. The protestors, some of whom had given testimonies in the case, marched to the office of the public prosecutor who had released Ibrahim on grounds of insufficient evidence.

ICTR expects first judgements soon

The President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) Judge Laity Kama said the tribunal would render its first judgements in "the very near future". Speaking at a press conference in New York yesterday, Kama said among the cases coming to a close are those of Jean-Paul Akeyesu a former mayor, and ex-prime minster Jean Kambanda.

SUDAN: Peace talks make little progress

Sudan peace talks in Addis Ababa entered their third day today with little progress made, news reports said. According to Sudanese state radio negotiators have failed to agree on the key issues of the nature of the state and role of religion, and these were dropped to keep the talks alive. They also failed to agree on the definition of the south. For the government it represents the territory demarcated at independence in 1956. The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) wants the "south" to encompass all areas where black Africans reside, including the central Nuba mountains.

Meanwhile, the SPLA accused the government of bombing several villages in the Nuba mountains on Tuesday. An SPLA spokesman said three

people were killed and six wounded in the air raid.

Nairobi, 6 August 1998, 17:30 gmt

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Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

DRC: Fighting in Kisangani, Uvira under rebel control 1998.8.6

DRC: Fighting in Kisangani, Uvira under rebel control

NAIROBI, 6 August 1998 (IRIN) - Fighting continued in DRC's third city, Kisangani, today between rebellious forces and the Congolese army, humanitarian sources in DRC told IRIN. Residents of Lubumbashi, the second city, said the situation there was now calm after clashes overnight Tuesday which left three people dead (including one Congolese and one Munyamulenge soldier) and dozens injured.

Uvira was reported to have fallen to rebel troops today. Humanitarian sources contacted by IRIN in the region confirmed the town was under Banyamulenge control, although shooting could still be heard. There were also incidences of looting. Mai-Mai groups, opposed to the Banyamulenge, have apparently been involved in the fighting. Humanitarian work has been suspended and several hundred people fled across the border into Burundi's Cibitoke province to escape heavy fighting yesterday.

Reports from Bukavu, meanwhile, indicated the rebels were consolidating their hold on the town. The Rwanda News Agency said the new leaders had called on forces loyal to President Laurent-Desire Kabila to surrender and report to a military camp on the outskirts of the town. Local residents told IRIN people were moving freely around the town, but pointed out the biggest uncertainty at the moment was the threat of a counter-attack by pro-Kabila troops.

Rwanda continues to deny any involvement in the rebellion. US military personnel in camouflage uniforms have been sighted at the Gisenyi border point, according to AP. The soldiers are members of part of the 'Rwanda Interagency Assessment Team', which has been in the country for about 10 days. Pentagon officials have confirmed the US presence in Rwanda, saying the 20-man is in the country as part of President Clinton's pledge to help "counter a resurgence of genocide".

Both the State Department and the UN have expressed concern over the situation in DRC. "We urge all countries in the region to respect the territorial integrity of the Congo, refrain from becoming involved in the conflict and respect international law," said James Foley, a State Department spokesman. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan echoed the call to respect DRC's sovereignty and appealed to regional leaders to try and prevent the crisis from spreading. He also called on the Congolese people to refrain from acts of persecution or harassment.

In Kinshasa there are continuing reports of persecution of ethnic Tutsis. Human Rights Watch said government soldiers were conducting house to house searches and stopping Tutsis at roadblocks and in the city centre. Humanitarian sources in the city told IRIN an estimated 1,000 Tutsis were being held at an open air stadium in Kinshasa.

The DRC mission to the UN has called on the Security Council to intervene and put a stop to the "Rwandan aggression", accusing Kigali of "declaring war" on Congo. And DRC government spokesman Didier Mumengi, during talks with diplomats in Kinshasa yesterday, threatened to "take the war into Rwandan territory". In a television broadcast, he also announced the lifting of the Kinshasa curfew as from today and urged Congolese citizens to "return to the task of national reconstruction with greatly increased vigilance". "The war imposed on us by Rwanda has ceased to be a matter for the Congolese armed forces alone," he said. Interior Minister Gaetan Kakudji described opposition leader Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma, named as "coordinator" of the rebellion, as a "servant of the Rwandans".

Ugandan Airlines meanwhile has suspended its twice-weekly flights to DRC because of the growing insecurity, the 'New Vision' daily reported.

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by orion.sas.upenn.edu (8.8.8/8.8.8/SAS.04) with ESMTP id TAA15486 for <aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu>; Thu, 6 Aug 1998 19:27:21 -0400 (EDT) Received: from uusasa by siafu.iconnect.co.ke with local (Exim 2.02 #1)
id 0z4Tae-0007MK-00; Thu, 6 Aug 1998 20:12:36 +0300 Received: (from majordom@localhost) by ocha.unon.org (8.6.12/8.6.12) id TAA29374; Thu, 6 Aug 1998 19:43:55 +0300 Date: Thu, 6 Aug 1998 19:29:13 +0300 (GMT+0300) From: IRIN - Central and Eastern Africa <irin@ocha.unon.org> To: irin-cea-weekly@ocha.unon.org Subject: DRC: Fighting spreads, Karaha appointed rebellion's deputy leader , 1998.8.6 Message-ID: <Pine.LNX.3.91.980806192720.28820A-100000@ocha.unon.org> MIME-Version: 1.0 Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN; charset=US-ASCII Sender: owner-irin-cea-weekly@ocha.unon.org Precedence: bulk X-URL:
http://www.reliefweb.int/emergenc/greatlak/latest.html Status: RO

DRC: Fighting spreads, Karaha appointed rebellion's deputy leader

Former foreign minister Bizima Karaha was today appointed deputy leader of the rebel group seeking to oust President Laurent-Desire Kabila, Rwandan radio reported. Opposition politician Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma was yesterday named to head the rebel movement.

Fighting continued in Kisangani today, and Uvira was reportedly in rebel hands. In Bukavu, the new leaders appeared to be consolidating their hold. [For more information, please refer to earlier IRIN item headlined "Fighting in Kisangani, Uvira under rebel control"].

Interior Minister Gaetan Kakudji admitted Goma and Bukavu had fallen to the rebels, but said government forces were fighting back in Bas Congo and Kisangani. Radio France Internationale reported that army reinforcements had been sent to Matadi in the west, and Kisangani. Various press reports said rebel forces had taken the western oil town of Muanda and the naval base of Banana, close to the Angolan enclave of Cabinda. Diplomatic souces cited Kakudji as saying three planeloads of Rwandan soldiers had landed at Kitona military base in the area, which was initially taken by rebel fighters who hijacked a plane there from Goma.

Human rights organisations expressed increasing concern over the persecution of Tutsis in Kinshasa and diplomatic sources told IRIN the Kinshasa authorities had voiced doubt over their ability to protect the Banyamulenge and other ethnic Tutsis in the city. One proposal put forward was the establishment of safe areas in Kinshasa for the Tutsis.

Rwanda today admitted it had grown suspicious of Kabila "shifting sides" and "supporting the very forces that committed genocide". In an interview with the Rwanda News Agency, army spokesman Emmanuel Ndahiro stuck by Kigali's denial of involvement in the DRC rebellion, blaming the current crisis on Kabila who was trying to "find scapegoats" for his problems. "This conflict might bring about further complications", he stated. "There is evidence that in the recent past, he (Kabila) has been lifting Interahamwe and ex-FAR from eastern Congo, from the regions of Masisi and Rutshuru, to Kamina base for reorganisation and training." Kamina is located near the Angolan border. Ndahiro dismissed DRC's threats of "taking the war to Rwanda", saying he doubted the country had enough troops to do this. He added that Rwanda would defend its borders.

Uganda said it was "very concerned" over events in Congo. The president's press secretary Hope Kivengere told IRIN however that Kampala was not disappointed with Kabila's performance. "When you're a new government you can't wave a wand and immediately get control of a country as big as Congo," she said. "All changes don't go in a straight line. We got rid of a big problem that was Mobutu." She claimed Uganda was satisifed with Kinshasa's cooperation in flushing out rebels based in eastern DRC, as well as with business opportunities opening up for Uganda in the country. However she could not confirm President Museveni's attendance at the Victoria Falls summit tomorrow to discuss the Congo problem. He is currently in the western town of Kasese overseeing the situation after an attack by Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) at the weekend.

While the conflict is still at an early stage, aid organisations began expressing fears about the possible humanitarian backlash. UNHCR reported that 19 refugees from Uvira had arrived in Tanzanian town of Kigoma by boat yesterday, after being turned back at the Burundi border which is closed. UNHCR has suspended its repatration of Tanzania-based DRC refugees, but some aid workers fear the possible mass return of recently-repatriated refugees from Fizi and Uvira.

Nairobi, 6 August 1998, 16:00 gmt

[ENDS]

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Date: Thu, 6 Aug 1998 15:12:59 +0300 (GMT+0300) From: IRIN - Central and Eastern Africa <irin@ocha.unon.org> Subject: DRC: Fighting in Kisangani, Uvira under rebel control 1998.8.6 Message-ID: <Pine.LNX.3.91.980806151055.18754b-100000@ocha.unon.org>

Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

IRIN Weekly Round-up 32-98 31 July-6 Aug 1998.8.7

U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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[The weekly roundup is based on IRIN daily updates and other relevant information from UN agencies, NGOs, governments, donors and the media. IRIN issues these reports for the benefit of the humanitarian community, but accepts no responsibility as to the accuracy of the original sources.]

Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Weekly Round-up 32-98 covering the period 31 July-6 Aug 1998

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Anti-Kabila rebellion in east

A rebellion was launched in eastern DRC, after government troops managed to put down an apparent revolt by Banyamulenge soldiers in the capital Kinshasa on Sunday. The towns of Bukavu, Goma, Uvira and Kindu were said to be in rebel hands by Thursday, with fighting underway in DRC's third city of Kisangani. The head of the rebellion was named as opposition politician Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma with his deputy, former foreign minister Bizima Karaha.

The DRC authorities accused Rwanda of "invasion", although Kigali has consistently denied any involvement. Kinshasa vowed to "take the war to Rwanda" and President Laurent-Desire Kabila warned the Congolese people to "prepare for a long war". Rebel leaders denied they wanted to break away from Congo, and said their rebellion was aimed at toppling Kabila whom they accused of "corruption, dictatorship and nepotism".

Human rights organisastions and aid workers expressed concern over the persecution of ethnic Tutsis in the capital Kinshasa. Humanitarian sources told IRIN Banyamulenge and other Tutsis were being rounded up by the armed forces. According to diplomatic sources, the Kinshasa authorities voiced doubt over their ability to protect ethnic Tutsis.

[For detailed information, please refer to a series of special reports filed by IRIN this week].

RWANDA: Hutu rebels kill over 100 in Kigali Rurale

Over 100 people were killed in a weekend rebel attack on a village in Kigali Rurale prefecture, the military commander of the area announced on Sunday. AFP quoted Colonel Fred Ibingira saying a large group of rebel youths struck Rushashi - 60 km north of the capital - overnight on Friday. Most of the victims were reportedly women and children, both Tutsis and Hutus, bludgeoned to death with clubs and machetes. The commander said at least 102 people were killed. He added the attackers were from the prefecture, but appeared to have launched the raid from Hutu rebel bases in northern Ruhengeri region. The authorities in Kigali said the army was combing the area for the rebels on Sunday. Map: http://www.expediamaps.com/results.asp?Place=Rushashi

According to AFP, the countryside close to Kigali has been the target of a recent wave of rebel attacks. Demands by the local population for arms to defend themselves have been rejected by Kigali on the grounds that the army was capable enough, regional administrator Wellars Gasamagera told the news agency.

Nun killed, rebel officer captured in northwest

A Roman Catholic nun was shot dead on Friday in Gisenyi, northwestern Rwanda by unidentified attackers, AP reported. Sister Valens Mukanoheli was killed in front of her mission. A church official said it was unclear if the gunmen were rebels or criminal elements. Meanwhile, Rwandan radio announced the capture on Friday of a rebel officer Lieutenant Joseph Barangerageje. He was allegedly responsible for coordinating the ambush of vehicles along the Ruhengeri-Gisenyi road.

Senior rebel leader killed

A second top Hutu rebel leader Lieutenant-Colonel Frodouald Mugemana has been killed in a military operation in northwestern Rwanda, news agencies reported on Tuesday. Details of the overnight battle in Nyarutovu commune, 80 km north of Kigali, are yet to be disclosed. But the military authorities said other rebels were killed and equipment captured in the strike. Mugemana was the aide de camp of Rwanda's late president Juvenal Habyarimana. His death follows the killing of Lieutenant-Colonel Leonard Nkundiye, another senior commander of the rebel Army for the Liberation of Rwanda (ALIR), and 250 militiamen on 23 July.

ICTR expects first judgements soon

The President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) Judge Laity Kama said the tribunal would render its first judgements in "the very near future". Speaking at a press conference in New York on Wednesday, Kama said among the cases coming to a close are those of Jean-Paul Akeyesu a former mayor, and ex-prime minster Jean Kambanda.

UGANDA: LRA rebels killed in SPLA offensive, paper says

At least 19 Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) gunmen were allegedly killed in southern Sudan's eastern Equatoria region by Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rebels, the state-owned 'New Vision' reported at the weekend. The Uganda paper said the LRA soldiers were killed during SPLA attacks on Torit, Magwi and Kapoeta on the Ugandan border. The 'New Vision' quoted security sources as claiming that 1,000 LRA rebels are encircled along the Juba-Torit road. The LRA is believed to operate out of bases at Jubelein, 60 km south of Juba, the southern capital. The paper said the SPLA have been battling government forces for a week in eastern Equatoria. Khartoum has claimed that the offensive is being assisted by the Ugandan army. Kampala has countered that two other Ugandan rebel groups, the West Nile Bank Front and the Former Uganda National Army, are supporting the Sudanese military.

ADF bases overrun, 25 rebels dead

The Ugandan army killed 25 rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and rescued 56 abducted people in the western district of Bundibugyo last week, the 'New Vision' said. It quoted the army Chief-of-Staff Brigadier James Kazini as saying the rebels were killed on Tuesday and Wednesday when their hideouts were overrun near the Sindira river. Six government soldiers and an abductee were killed in the operation, AFP reported. Among those rescued were 13 old women and 43 children aged between one and 10 years. They were citizens of both DRC and Uganda, the news agency said.

SUDAN: Peace talks make little progress

Sudan peace talks between the SPLA and government in Addis Ababa entered their third day on Thursday with little progress made, news reports said. According to Sudanese state radio negotiators have failed to agree on the key issues of the nature of the state and role of religion, and these were dropped to keep the talks alive. They also failed to agree on the definition of the south. For the government it represents the territory demarcated at independence in 1956. The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) wants the "south" to encompass all areas where black Africans reside, including the central Nuba mountains.

BURUNDI: Belgium promotes international peace effort

Belgium has announced an international effort to promote peace in Burundi. Belgian Foreign Minister Erik Derycke said on Sunday that Canada is to host a meeting in Ottawa on 19-20 August to evaluate progress in peace talks "and the methods of an eventual implementation", Reuters reported. He added that any relaunch of Belgian links with Burundi would be taken in consultation with international partners after the Ottawa meeting. His statement clarified comments by Secretary of State for Cooperation Reginald Moreels on Sunday who said that Belgian cooperation would be relaunched in the coming months. Moreels said that a new policy of constructive engagement would not be a sign of approval for the government of President Pierre Buyoya.

A spokesman for the opposition CNDD told Reuters he was "astonished" by Moreels' comments as Burundi had not met the democratic conditions set by the international community.

Minister laments human cost of sanctions

Burundi's gross domestic product has fallen by seven percent as a result of regional economic sanctions, PANA reported Finance Minister Astere Yirukurigoma as saying. "We lost about 50 percent of export earnings in 1996 and import costs increased by over 25 percent," the minister said on Friday. The price of fuel has risen by 300 percent. He added the figures failed to adequately describe the human impact of the embargo, which has affected access to healthcare and schooling.

Nairobi, 7 August 1998

[ENDS]

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From owner-irin-cea-weekly@ocha.unon.org Fri Aug 7 12:48:33 1998 Return-Path: <owner-irin-cea-weekly@ocha.unon.org> Received: from siafu.iconnect.co.ke (root@siafu.iconnect.co.ke [208.208.120.2])
by orion.sas.upenn.edu (8.8.8/8.8.8/SAS.04) with ESMTP id MAA14282 for <aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu>; Fri, 7 Aug 1998 12:48:03 -0400 (EDT) Received: from uusasa by siafu.iconnect.co.ke with local (Exim 2.02 #1)
id 0z4pbB-0001Rp-00; Fri, 7 Aug 1998 19:42:37 +0300 Received: (from majordom@localhost) by ocha.unon.org (8.6.12/8.6.12) id SAA12283; Fri, 7 Aug 1998 18:37:27 +0300 Date: Fri, 7 Aug 1998 18:35:38 +0300 (GMT+0300) From: IRIN - Central and Eastern Africa <irin@ocha.unon.org> To: irin-cea-weekly@ocha.unon.org Subject: DRC: Rebels consolidate gains in west as expatriates evacuate 1998.8.7 Message-ID: <Pine.LNX.3.91.980807183400.3405T@ocha.unon.org> MIME-Version: 1.0 Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN; charset=US-ASCII Sender: owner-irin-cea-weekly@ocha.unon.org Precedence: bulk X-URL: http://www.reliefweb.int/emergenc/greatlak/latest.html Status: RO

DRC: Rebels consolidate gains in west as expatriates evacuate

NAIROBI, 7 August 1998 (IRIN) - The western towns of Muanda and the Banana naval base are firmly under rebel control, sources in the area confirmed to IRIN today. The soldiers are said to include Rwandans and the situation is now calm.

The military forces in control were described as friendly. Currently no boats or helicopters are being allowed into Banana. Two oil workers who failed to report for evacuation to Soyo in Angola on time have been told by the military to stay put. IRIN's sources said the two are not being held captive. The border with the Angolan enclave of Cabinda is closed.

Burundian Defence Minister Alfred Nkurunziza today denied reports circulating in Bujumbura that Burundian troops had crossed into Uvira, which was under rebel control by yesterday. Thirty-nine expatriate aid workers were today evacuated from the town, which lies on the border with Bujumbura, humanitarian sources in DRC told IRIN.

Former DRC foreign minister Bizima Karaha, who was yesterday named deputy leader of the rebellion, declared President Laurent-Desire Kabila was a "spent force". In an exclusive interview for the opposition newspaper 'Le Soft International', he said the first rebellion in 1996 had brought to power a "man worse than Mobutu". "We ask the people to forgive us," he said. The current rebellion had nothing to do with the Banyamulenge and even less with the Rwandans, he said. "It is a decision taken by the entire Congolese people." Karaha accused Kabila of surrounding himself with members of his Balubakat clan, from Katanga province. Kabila "couldn't manage a shop, let alone a country," he added.

Also in 'Le Soft', DRC army general Eluki Monga Aundu appealed for a general mobilisation, warning the country was "occupied" and "in danger". Kabila, in his first comments since the start of the rebellion, yesterday again accused Rwanda of "aggression", saying Kigali thought of DRC as a "colony". "They committed crimes when they were our allies," he added and described Rwanda as a "toad that wants to swallow an elephant". He also said Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni was the ally of Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame "in this aggression".

Kabila is due to meet South African Foreign and Defence Ministers Alfred Nzo and Joe Modise in Lubumbashi today, press reports said. According to AFP, only local Lubumbashi media have been authorised to cover the meeting. A summit meeting, bringing together the leaders of DRC, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, Namibia and Tanzania is to be held in Victoria Falls over the weekend.

The main opposition party in DRC, Union pour la democratie et le progres social (UDPS), issued a statement saying it was not too late to find a political solution to the crisis "before resorting to more radical military options".

Residents of Kinshasa described the situation there as "more and more tense". The OAU is to send a mission to the city in a bid to resolve the crisis. Meanwhile, the USA, Britain, Japan and other embassies have told non-essential staff to leave. The UN evacuated 77 non-essential staff from Kinshasa yesterday, a UN spokesman said. About 20 essential staff remain in the city.

Nairobi, 7 August 1998, 15:20 gmt

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Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

IRIN Update 477 for 8-10 Aug 1998.8.10

U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 477 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday-Monday 8-10 August 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Beni in rebel hands

The authorities in Democratic Republic of Congo yesterday accused Ugandan troops of entering the country to assist the rebellion as the border town of Beni fell to the rebels. Information Minister Didier Mumengi claimed a "Ugandan and Rwandan military convoy" which included tanks, trucks and armoured vehicles, was heading towards Oysha and Komanda in the northeast Bunia region. Uganda flatly denied the accusations, but humanitarian sources told IRIN today the town of Beni, on the Ugandan border south of Bunia, had fallen to rebel forces which were now advancing on Bunia itself. [For detailed information, refer to IRIN item today headlined "Beni falls to rebels amid claims of Ugandan involvement"].

UGANDA: Government denies assassination attempt on Museveni

The Ugandan government has denied media reports that Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels killed 33 people, including 19 soldiers, in an attack on the western town of Kasese last week. Ugandan state radio, quoting the acting Army Chief-of-Staff Brigadier James Kazini, said that a rebel raid took place on a local trading centre on Thursday. Nine ADF members were killed. But in the confusion of the battle, two army units opened fire on each other "leaving many injured", the radio said.

An ADF spokesman claimed the attack was an assassination attempt on President Yoweri Museveni, Tanzanian radio reported. According to the rebel official, the bid failed because Museveni's arrival in Kasese was delayed. Museveni's spokesman John Nagenda denied there had been an attempt on the president's life. In an address to the Kasese district council on Thursday, Museveni ruled out a negotiated settlement to the conflict. He said the army was going to be provided with night-vision equipment "to fight the ADF day and night," AFP reported.

Anti-terrorist law passed

A new law has been approved that will declare Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the ADF terrorist organisations, the private 'Monitor' newspaper reported on Friday. Under the legislation, the onus would be on terrorist suspects to prove their innocence. The Minister of Internal Affairs Major Tom Butime told parliament that the new law, empowering his office with cabinet approval to declare an organisation a terrorist outfit, will come into force this week. "We shall now handle those terrorists fast, fairly and firmly," Butime said. He also alleged the LRA had collaborators in Kampala, and they "will be dealt with by the new law." Butime accused Sudan of "providing the training, coordination, planning, funding, equipping and all forms of facilitation to these terrorists."

RWANDA: Rebels kill 24 in weekend attacks

Hutu rebels killed 24 people and injured eight in two weekend attacks in northwestern Rwanda, the private Rwanda News Agency reported. Eleven people died and seven were wounded in a pre-dawn raid on Saturday on Kanama commune, 20 km east of Gisenyi. AFP said the scene of the attack was a displaced persons' camp. On Sunday, rebels killed 16 people in Mutura commune. Six of the dead were found burnt in their homes, military sources told the Rwanda News Agency.

Courts sentence 13 to death for genocide

Rwandan courts have sentenced 13 people to death for their role in the 1994 genocide, AFP reported state radio as saying. In hearings on Thursday, a Cyangugu court handed down death sentences on five people. Execution orders were also passed on seven people in Gisenyi and one person in Kigali. A total of six people were acquitted. Meanwhile, 72 genocide suspects were freed from Gikondo prison in Kigali.

SUDAN: New round of peace talks in Nairobi

An Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) communique on last week's failed Sudan peace talks said both sides have agreed to a further round of negotiations within six months, to be held in Nairobi. The statement said both Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) expressed a commitment to "continue with the IGAD peace process".

Garang in Egypt for talks

SPLA leader John Garang arrived in Cairo on Sunday to meet with top Egyptian officials and Sudanese opposition groups, AFP reported. He is expected to hold talks with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa on Tuesday on developments in Sudan. Garang is also to take part in a conference of the leadership of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) opposition umbrella group.

Meanwhile, NDA forces claim to have killed 15 government soldiers in an attack on Durdayb military camp on the main Kassala-Port Sudan road on 31 July, opposition radio said.

Khartoum condemns East African bombings

The Sudanese government has condemned the bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the state news agency said on Saturday. External Relations Minister Mustafa Uthman Isma'il described the incidents as regrettable.

KENYA: Death toll reaches 197 in Nairobi blast

The death toll in the Nairobi bombing has reached 197, Kenyan radio said today. Rescue workers are still searching through the rubble of Cooperative House to reach two women who may still be alive after the blast on Friday, aimed at the adjacent US embassy. Kenyan TV said on Saturday a man "dressed in traditional Arab garments" was arrested by the police shortly after the explosion. A previously unknown organisation, the Islamic Army for the Liberation of Muslim Holy Sites, has reportedly claimed responsibility for the simultaneous car bomb attacks in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. A Kenyan government official said 40 buildings in the city were damaged, 27 of them extensively, by the explosion. The government has appealed for international assistance. Israeli rescue teams backed by French experts have taken charge of the recovery effort. US investigators have cordoned off the US embassy and are conducting an independent search. US casualties were flown out of the country over the

weekend.

TANZANIA: Authorities hold suspects over bombing

Tanzanian authorities have taken "several" people into custody in connection with the bombing of the US embassy in Dar es Salaam, CNN reported today. On Sunday the death toll from the blast rose to 10, with 70 people hospitalised, AFP said. Tanzanian radio said on Friday the government has formed a special unit to investigate the bomb attack, and promised to do everything possible to unearth the culprits.

Nairobi, 10 August 1998, 16:00 gmt

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Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

DRC: Beni falls to rebels amid claims of Ugandan involvement 1998.8.10

DRC: Beni falls to rebels amid claims of Ugandan involvement

NAIROBI, 10 August 1998 (IRIN) - The authorities in Democratic Republic of Congo yesterday accused Ugandan troops of entering the country to assist the rebellion as the border town of Beni fell to the rebels.

Information Minister Didier Mumengi claimed a "Ugandan and Rwandan military convoy" which included tanks, trucks and armoured vehicles, was heading towards Oysha and Komanda in the northeast Bunia region.

Uganda flatly denied the accusations, but humanitarian sources told IRIN today the town of Beni, on the Ugandan border south of Bunia, had fallen to rebel forces which were now advancing on Bunia itself. "Ugandan involvement cannot be discounted," the well-placed sources said, adding the biggest fear was of looting by retreating soldiers. The border between Uganda and DRC at Mahagi is closed and Congolese soldiers are preventing anyone from crossing.

A Ugandan army spokesman, in comments to IRIN today, blamed political forces in Kinshasa for "trying to link us" to the alleged Rwandan expedition. "We have our own problems in the border area and they're enough for us," he added. Several weeks ago, the Ugandan army established a base in Ntabi on the DRC side of the border to try and flush out rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).

Bunia itself is still in government hands. Local radio there on Saturday reportedly broadcast inflammatory messages calling on people to attack Tutsis with "knives and machetes". The Bunia authorities have confiscated communication equipment. "There is a lot of confusion over which army is which," IRIN's sources said.

Three planeloads of government reinforcements have arrived in Kisangani and are attempting to reach Bunia in trucks, although bad roads are hampering progress, the sources added. It was unclear why the troops did not fly directly to Bunia.

In South Kivu, there is a strong military presence in the town of Bukavu, aid sources confirmed to IRIN. Some security incidents have taken place with the looting of aid organisations' premises. Some vehicles have also been commandeered. Last week's heavy fighting was reportedly due to the presence of Mayi-Mayi rebels in the town, and casualties were said to be high.

Most expatriate humanitarian workers have now been evacuated from Bukavu across the Rwandan border to Cyangugu. Bukavu is now calm and movement during the day carries no greater risk than usual, local sources told IRIN.

International aid workers, evacuated from Kisangani, say the town is still under government control. Foreign aid workers also left Goma for Rwanda today.

Meanwhile, the rebellion reiterated its ultimate aim was to capture Kinshasa. In an announcement over Radio Bukavu, monitored by the Rwanda News Agency on Friday, the rebels gave out the names of more of their leaders. These include Maitre Elyse Buyengo, Emmanuel Kamanzi (former liaison officer between the ADFL and UN/NGOs), Musa Nyamwisi, Kalala Shambuyi, Maurice Nyambaga, Ngangura Kasole, Mondja Eyoka and Tambwe Mwamba.

A regional summit meeting in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, over the weekend ended in failure with DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila unable to reach agreement or compromise with his Rwandan and Ugandan counterparts on who was responsible for the fighting. President Pasteur Bizimungu of Rwanda again denied his country was involved in the rebellion, and demanded that Kabila substantiate the claims. The summit established a four-member committee - made up of Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Zambia - to monitor the conflict and try and secure a ceasefire, Rwandan radio reported.

A DRC government statement, broadcast by state television on Saturday, asserted that "the Rwandan Tutsis, who have led our army since independence, know our strong and weak points...and how to exploit them". Replying to concerns raised by humanitarian workers and human rights organisations over the fate of Tutsis in Kinshasa, the statement declared "a Tutsi or any other person found to be an accomplice of the invaders will be made to undergo the rigours of national law". It claimed Tutsis were not being arrested simply because they were Tutsis, and "the invader" should be held responsible for the "fate of any victims".

Amid conflicting claims as to whether the western town of Boma had fallen to the rebels, the pilot of an aircraft hijacked to western DRC at the start of the rebellion has been giving an account of the circumstances. According to Radio France Internationale, the Nigerian pilot, Raymond Gnang, said he was taken by force to the military base of Kitona from Goma. Three planes were taken to Kitona, carrying Rwandan troops, allegedly including former DRC army chief-of-staff James Kabare. The pilot said he flew his plane first to Kigali to refuel. After reaching Kitona, he claimed Kabare ordered him to return to Kigali, but he disobeyed and went first to Lagos and then back to Kinshasa where he recounted his story.

Nairobi, 10 August 1998, 15:20 gmt

[ENDS]

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Date: Mon, 10 Aug 1998 18:16:55 +0300 (GMT+0300) From: IRIN - Central and Eastern Africa <irin@ocha.unon.org> Subject: DRC: Beni falls to rebels amid claims of Ugandan involvement 1998.8.10 Message-ID: <Pine.LNX.3.91.980810181517.10410A-100000@ocha.unon.org>

Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

IRIN Update 478 for 11 Aug e: bulk

U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 478 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 11 August 1998)

DRC: Rebels deny government forces heading east

The rebellion in eastern DRC has denied claims by the government that its troops are approaching the Kivu region. At the same time, the army in government-held Bunia called for "unity" amid reports that rebels are pushing towards the town. Humanitarian sources told IRIN the western town of Boma fell to the rebels today (Tuesday). [For detailed information, see separate IRIN item issued today]

Call for aggressors to be "punished" - newspaper

The OAU and the UN will be called on to "punish" countries discovered to be involved in the destabilisation of the DRC, Zimbabwe's official 'Herald' newspaper said on Sunday. The South African news agency SAPA reported the 'Herald' as quoting Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe announcing the dispatch of a team of southern African foreign ministers and military officers on a fact-finding mission to the DRC this week. If the team, made up of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Tanzania and Zambia, concludes the DRC is the victim of external aggression, the matter would be taken up with the OAU and UN, the paper said. The fact-finding mission was agreed at a summit of seven regional leaders on the DRC crisis held in Zimbabwe at the weekend.

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Zimbabwe to provide military assistance

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15 new ministers sworn-in

Fifteen newly-appointed ministers were sworn in by President Yoweri Museveni yesterday. State radio said among the appointments was Stephen Kavuma as minister of state for defence. At least seven women were named as ministers in what the radio described as a mini-reshuffle.

KENYA: Death toll rises to 211

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TANZANIA: 14 people detained over blast

In Tanzania, 14 people have been detained and are being questioned by the authorities and FBI agents over the Dar es Salaam blast. Six of the men are reportedly Sudanese, six Iraqis and a Somali and a Turk. The authorities initially rounded up 30 people. US forensic experts are continuing to sift through the wreckage in the embassy compound for clues. Cameras which might yield crucial evidence are believed to have survived the blast.

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Nairobi, 11 August 1998 15:15 gmt

[ENDS]

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by orion.sas.upenn.edu (8.8.8/8.8.8/SAS.04) with ESMTP id OAA24503 for <aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu>; Wed, 12 Aug 1998 14:20:37 -0400 (EDT) Received: from uusasa by siafu.iconnect.co.ke with local (Exim 2.02 #1)
id 0z6eVS-0004IP-00; Wed, 12 Aug 1998 20:16:14 +0300 Received: (from majordom@localhost) by ocha.unon.org (8.6.12/8.6.12) id SAA09947; Wed, 12 Aug 1998 18:55:49 +0300 Date: Tue, 11 Aug 1998 18:15:20 +0300 (GMT+0300) From: IRIN - Central and Eastern Africa <irin@ocha.unon.org> To: irin-cea-updates@ocha.unon.org Subject: Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Update 478 for 11 Aug 1998.8.11 Message-ID: <Pine.LNX.3.91.980811181432.26757A-100000@ocha.unon.org> MIME-Version: 1.0 Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN; charset=US-ASCII Sender: owner-irin-cea-updates@ocha.unon.org Precedence: bulk X-URL: http://www.reliefweb.int/ Status: RO

U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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Nairobi, 11 August 1998 15:15 gmt

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From: IRIN - Central and Eastern Africa <irin@ocha.unon.org> Subject: Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Update 478 for 11 Aug e: bulk

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Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

DRC: Rebels deny government forces heading east 1998.8.11

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NAIROBI, 11 August 1998 (IRIN) - The rebellion in eastern DRC has denied claims by the government that its troops are approaching the Kivu region. At the same time, the army in government-held Bunia called for "unity" amid reports that rebels are pushing towards the town.

DRC Information Minister Didier Mumengi claimed government soldiers yesterday occupied the Kahuzi Biega national park, less than 50 km from Bukavu, and were advancing on the town itself. But the claim was strongly denied by South Kivu Vice-Governor Benjamin Serukiza. He told IRIN today government forces were nowhere near Bukavu and described the reports as "lies". Bukavu, he said, was calm and the rebellion was spreading. He added the name of the rebellion would be officially announced at some point.

As rebels reportedly headed towards Bunia, on the border with Uganda, after taking Beni to the south, the 225th battalion based there said "all measures have been taken to render the enemy harmless". In a broadcast over state-owned Bunia radio today, the army accused Uganda of sending troops to the area "to stop our counter-offensive". The statement "urged (officers) to unite". "There will be no objections from the forces of justice or truth when, motivated by sacred anger, we massacre the aggressors," the statement, monitored by the BBC, added.

Meanwhile, humanitarian sources told IRIN rebels captured the western town of Boma today, but stressed the town could be retaken by government forces as many reinforcements were being sent to the area.

The opposition Forces du Futur party appeared to throw its weight behind the rebellion, denying reports in the Belgian daily 'Le Soir' that its president Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma had resigned as coordinator of the rebels. According to the newspaper, Ngoma had returned to France after the party allegedly "disowned" him. But in a press release received by IRIN today, the Forces du Futur said the "struggle led by its president is a national struggle". "It is a struggle for fundamental rights, bringing together all active forces", the statement added.

An OAU team arrived in Kinshasa on Sunday in an attempt to mediate the conflict, and is due in Kigali today before going on to Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Mamadou Ba, who is leading the mission, said the OAU was seeking a peaceful resolution to the crisis and "we must listen to everybody". In a memorandum to the OAU delegation, the Congolese government accused the rebellion - by hijacking planes to the western Kitona military base - of trying to "suffocate Kinshasa" in an attempt to seize the vital port of Matadi and the hydro-electric dam at Inga which provides electricity to Kinshasa.

Great Lakes analyst Filip Reyntyens told IRIN today the opening of a western front by the rebels was "extremely risky" but had the potential to "starve" Kinshasa. Capturing the Inga power plant would give rebels the opportunity to "switch off" both Kinshasa and Katanga. He added that the attitude of the so-called Katangese gendarmes - a faction within the "very heterogeneous" army - would be critical to President Laurent-Desire Kabila's survival. "If they turn [against Kabila], he's lost," he said. Reyntyens also believed there had been a "rapprochement" between Kabila and Mayi-Mayi rebels who are opposed to the Banyamulenge.

Rwanda has further accused Kabila's government of training at least 10,000 ex-FAR and Interahamwe militiamen at a training camp in the southern town of Kamina. AP quoted President Pasteur Bizimungu who said his country had "credible evidence" Kabila was planning to use the Hutu forces against Rwanda.

DRC state radio today claimed 18 Rwandan soldiers were killed in a gunbattle with government troops near Kinshasa. It said the clash occurred yesterday at Kasangulu, 40 km west of the capital, and involved an estimated 100 Rwandan soldiers fleeing after failing to incite Congolese soldiers in the capital to join a Tutsi-led revolt. Reuters said there was no independent confirmation of the report.

In Kinshasa, the government is mobilising the youth to fight for the country. Gabonese radio, reporting from Kinshasa, said 5,000 young people had already "volunteered" to enlist in the army. Messages encouraging mobilisation are reportedly broadcast daily on national radio and television.

Nairobi, 11 August 1998, 14:45 gmt

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From: IRIN - Central and Eastern Africa <irin@ocha.unon.org> Subject: DRC: Rebels deny government forces heading east 1998.8.11

Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

DRC: Hate radio re-emerges as rebels push towards Bunia 1998.8.12

DRC: Hate radio re-emerges as rebels push towards Bunia

NAIROBI, 12 August 1998 (IRIN) - As the rebellion appears to be gaining momentum, hate radio broadcasts have re-emerged in the northeast Bunia region, where rebels are said to be pushing towards Bunia town.

Unlike former hate radio stations, these broadcasts are being made over government radio. Radio Television Nationale Congolaise in Bunia on Saturday ordered Congolese people to arm themselves with "a machete, spear, arrow, hoe, spades, rakes, nails, truncheons, irons, barbed wire, stones and the like" to "kill the Rwandan Tutsis" in Ituri district. "Wherever you see a Rwandan Tutsi, regard him as your enemy," the broadcast continued. The radio acknowledged Bukavu and other areas of South Kivu were under rebel control, but vowed to defeat them.

In another broadcast on Radio Bunia this morning, a DRC military commander condemned the Ugandans and Rwandans who were trying to "dominate" Congo. The rebels were now poised to "occupy" Bunia, but army reinforcements had arrived, he claimed. "Be ferocious," he told his listeners. "You will detect the enemies and massacre them without mercy."

The Kinshasa authorities continued to maintain they were repulsing the rebels on all fronts, but journalists who were allowed into the eastern town of Goma witnessed it was firmly held by the rebellion and described the situation as calm. A rebel commander, Sylvain Mbuki from Katanga, quoted by the Rwanda News Agency, said there had been very little resistance in the east of the country.

The Belgian daily 'Le Soir' said he stressed the uprising against President Laurent-Desire Kabila was not a Tutsi revolt. "None of us are Rwandan," he pointed out, adding that in Goma "there are very few Banyamulenge". The rebellion, whose name according to Reuters was today given as the Congolese Movement for Democracy, was comprised of 19 battalions amounting to about 15,000 men, Mbuki said. And rebel spokesmen, quoted by Reuters today, claimed their leaders included Emile Ilunga a prominent Katangese politician who favours the secession of his home province.

Another commander in Goma, Major Jean-Pierre Ondekane, told journalists the aim of the rebellion was to overthrow President Laurent-Desire Kabila, and ruled out any negotiations. "We cannot negotiate with a dictator who is worse than Mobutu," AFP quoted him as saying.

Meanwhile, an aide to Arthur Z'ahidi Ngoma today confirmed the opposition leader was still the coordinator of the rebellion. The aide told IRIN that Ngoma was based in Goma but travelled extensively throughout rebel-occupied territory to "make contacts". The aide added that the rebel movement wanted to dissociate itself from "the numerous Mobutist opportunists travelling to Kampala and Kigali these days to join the rebellion". A regional analyst told IRIN he believed Rwanda "wants to make Ngoma a more reliable puppet than Kabila".

Ngoma's aide further said Beni in the northeast and Boma in the west were in rebel hands, along with Kindu, west of Bukavu. Humanitarian sources in the region told IRIN the rebels had not yet reached Kalima which is close to Kindu. The aide also claimed an uprising "favourable to the rebels" had broken out in Tshikapa, in Kasai Occidental near the Angolan border. Journalists in Goma were told by local residents there was fighting around Sake, north of Goma, formerly a stronghold of the Mayi-Mayi rebels. Local people added that plane rotations between Goma and the Kitona military base in the west were continuing at the rate of "three to four planes per day", AFP reported.

Kabila warned the Congolese they risked "returning to slavery" unless they defended themselves. In a television broadcast, he said the people should first "count on their capacity to defend themselves before counting on the assistance our friends can given us". Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi yesterday condemned "acts of aggression" against the DRC, warning that the conflict could again destabilise the Great Lakes region and urging the international community to take steps to contain the crisis.

Forty ex-FAZ generals have reportedly offered their support in a letter to Kabila. According to PANA news agency, the officers who remained in the country after the fall of Mobutu Sese Seko, pledged their cooperation and commended Kabila's efforts to "remove foreign troops" from the armed forces. The letter was signed by General Amela Bahati, PANA said. Meanwhile, about 60 government soldiers, wounded by the fighting in Kinshasa, have turned up in Congo-Brazzaville, Gabonese radio said. In a report from Brazzaville, it said they entered the country via the Loukami border village after crossing the Congo river with their weapons.

Guillaume Ngafa, chairman of the banned Congolese human rights association ASADHO, accused Kabila, "faced with an external threat", of "playing the racist and ethnic card". Interviewed by Gabonese radio in Switzerland, he concurred with rebel sentiments that Kabila "has behaved like a true despot".

The EU and UN yesterday both expressed concern over the conflict in DRC. In a statement, the EU condemned "acts of violence against civilians", and voiced anxiety over "the possibility of foreign interference in the country's internal affairs". It urged cooperation between the DRC and UN to find a solution. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he was disturbed by "reported violations of the DRC's territorial integrity". He also expressed concern over "instances of ethnically-motivated persecution" by parties to the conflict and appealed for upholding the standards and principles of international humanitarian law. Annan said he was concerned by the reported recruitment of child soldiers.

Belgian Foreign Minister Erik Derycke meanwhile denied promoting a "Tutsiland" in eastern DRC. His spokesman Hubert Cooreman said comments he made at a recent news conference were "misinterpreted", according to media reports. Derycke reportedly remarked the international community would find it hard to accept the secession of Kivu, but that the province "could temporarily become a buffer zone, which remains under the sovereignty of Congo, but in fact under the governance of Kigali". Cooreman explained that Derycke's remarks were merely a hypothesis and "politically untenable".

Nairobi, 12 August 1998, 14:50 gmt

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Date: Wed, 12 Aug 1998 17:57:58 +0300 (GMT+0300) Subject: DRC: Hate radio re-emerges as rebels push towards Bunia 1998.8.12

Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

IRIN Update 482 for 18 August 1998.8.18

U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 482 for Central and Eastern Africa (Tuesday 18 August 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Confusion over Kabila's whereabouts

[For further detailed information on DRC, refer to today's separate IRIN item headlined "Regional mediation efforts intensify"]

There was confusion today (Tuesday) over the whereabouts of President Laurent-Desire Kabila, also DRC defence minister. Press reports said he did not attend a regional defence ministers' meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe yesterday (Monday). Other reports claimed he left Kinshasa yesterday for his Lubumbashi stronghold. His Information Minister, Didier Mumengi, merely said "he is in the Democratic Republic of Congo", when asked by journalists about the president's movements. Still blaming Rwanda for the rebellion underway in the country, Mumengi said the rebels "will never reach Kinshasa". "We have what is needed to stop them reaching Kinshasa," he added, according to Reuters.

Soldiers told to regroup

State radio yesterday broadcast a message to government soldiers, telling them to regroup at a military base in the city. AP said the call came amid increasing disarray in the army. It quoted a former military intelligence officer, with close ties to the government, who claimed the important Zulu battalion had defected to the rebels in western DRC.

Kinshasa was again without electricity today, after rebels captured the western Inga hydroelectic dam.

Aru in rebel hands

Humanitarian sources told IRIN today the town of Aru, north of Bunia, on the border with Uganda had fallen to the rebels.

Ngoma predicts new DRC government "in the days ahead"

Meanwhile, one of the rebel leaders Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma, previously named coordinator of the rebellion, told Radio France Internationale he was in Goma. The new institutions announced this week in eastern DRC by the Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD) were temporary, he said. A new government would be in place in Kinshasa "in the days ahead". He stressed the pan-Congolese character of the rebellion which, he said, had no single leader because "we want to depart a bit from warlord Kabila's methods". Once they reached Kinshasa, they would work together with all "struggling forces", including the main opposition party Union pour la democratie et le progres social (UDPS) led by Etienne Tshisekedi.

UDPS urges Angola not to "rescue" Kabila

The UDPS yesterday urged Angola "not to rush to the rescue" of Kabila, who briefly visited Luanda at the weekend. In a statement issued in Paris, reported by AFP, the party accused Kabila of "giving the impression of having good relations with the Luanda authorities and making juicy deals with Jonas Savimbi's UNITA". "The re-establishment of a lasting peace in the DRC...will be achieved through the elimination of the major obstacle, which is Laurent Kabila," the statement said.

OAU condemns "external intervention"

OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim has said that if the DRC government's accusations against Uganda and Rwanda prove to be true, the two countries would be "guilty of violating the OAU's charter", Tanzanian radio reported. In an interview with the radio yesterday, he said the OAU had sent emissaries to Rwanda, Uganda and DRC to investigate the claims of "invasion". According to the radio, he added that "even if the rebels took power...they would not solve the country's (DRC) problems". A statement issued by the OAU in Addis Ababa today called on the rebels to lay down their arms and condemned "any external intervention" in DRC's affairs.

BURUNDI: Returnees complain of mistreatment in DRC

Some of the 60 Rwandans and Burundians who were evacuated to Bujumbura from Kinshasa yesterday, told the Agence burundaise de presse they had been mistreated in the Congolese capital. The Burundi ambassador to DRC, who was among the evacuees, had expressed fears for their safety while still in Kinshasa.

Meanwhile, the rebel CNDD-FDD group claimed Burundian soldiers had crossed into Uvira to help DRC rebel forces capture the town. The Burundi government has consistently denied involvement in the DRC conflict.

TANZANIA: Refugees arriving from DRC, Burundi

UNHCR Kigoma told IRIN 180 Congolese had arrived by boat in the western Tanzanian region of Kigoma since the beginning of the DRC war. UNHCR added it was "expecting many more Congolese" based on the accounts of the newly- arrived refugees, most of whom are from Uvira. The refugees will be accommodated in Nyarugusu refugee camp, in Kasulu district, which was built to house some 41,000 Congolese who fled the 1996 war against Mobutu Sese Seko.

UNHCR also said there had been a recent influx of Burundian refugees, with 857 crossing into the Kigoma region between 5 and 17 August. Most of them had fled fighting in the southern Burundi provinces of Rutana, Bururi and Makamba. They were reportedly in a poor condition. According to OCHA, there are some 272,000 Burundian refugees in Tanzania, including 160,000 in Kigoma region and 112,000 in Ngara region.

KENYA-TANZANIA: Albright visits bomb sites

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright arrived in the region today to visit the bomb blast sites in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam and meet top leaders. Press reports said that during the one-day visit she would also convey her condolences to some of those injured in the bombings that killed over 250 and left more than 5,000 wounded.

RWANDA: Genocide suspect pleads not guilty at ICTR

A former prefect of Butare in southern Rwanda yesterday pleaded not guilty to charges of genocide and crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, the independent Hirondelle news agency reported. The prefect, Alphonse Nteziryayo, is accused of "ordering the murder of every surviving Tutsi" in his prefecture during the 1994 genocide. He is further accused of taking part in the killings himself.

Nairobi, 18 August 1998, 14:15 gmt

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Date: Tue, 18 Aug 1998 17:13:14 +0300 (GMT+0300) From: IRIN - Central and Eastern Africa <irin@ocha.unon.org> Subject: Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Update 482 for 18 August 1998.8.18 Message-ID: <Pine.LNX.3.91.980818171139.32158N-100000@ocha.unon.org>

Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

DRC: Regional mediation efforts intensify 1998.8.18

DRC: Regional mediation efforts intensify

NAIROBI, 18 August 1998 (IRIN) - Defence ministers from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are meeting in Zimbabwe today to discuss the regional implications of the escalating conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The meeting follows talks yesterday in Harare between defence ministers from Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe. DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila was expected at the table, but his presence could not be confirmed, and his whereabouts still remain a mystery.

The wider SADC discussions today are shrouded in secrecy amid reports of divisions within the regional alliance that brought Kabila to power, sources in Harare told IRIN. There has been no official announcement of the attendees. Zambia's defence minister is however believed to have arrived, and other SADC countries have sent officials to the talks.

A notable absentee is South African Defence Minister Joe Modise. Along with Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo, he left Pretoria today for Kigali and Kampala. South African officials would not confirm whether the ministerial team would meet Ugandan leader Yoweri Museveni and Rwandan Vice President and Defence Minister Paul Kagame, media reports said.

The Harare talks are expected to review the findings of a mediation and verification committee of the foreign ministers of Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. They have been investigating Kabila's allegations of Rwandan and Ugandan backing for the two-week-old rebellion. The ministers have been shuttling between Kampala, Kigali and Kinshasa, and it is not clear whether they have arrived in Harare to present their report.

Neither is it certain what the defence chiefs meeting can achieve to head off what is widely regarded as Kabila's impending defeat. "It might flop, that's part of the reason for keeping a thick blanket [of secrecy] over it," a local political commentator suggested.

The basis of the talks are also problematic, analysts say. According to diplomatic sources in South Africa, Pretoria favours more inclusive dialogue involving Rwanda, Uganda and the Congolese rebels. The formulation of the Harare meeting seems to tilt toward forthright backing for Kinshasa rather than mediation.

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who reportedly has close ties to Kabila, last week suggested that Harare would be willing to intervene militarily to protect peace and stability within SADC members. But with the rapid advance of the rebellion in the DRC, most regional analysts believe it may be too late to save Kabila's government.

"Mugabe and Zimbabwe lead the pack in so far as sympathies for Kabila are concerned. Following close behind are Namibia and Angola, and to a lesser extent Zambia," a defence consultant in Harare told IRIN. "The other camp" within the 14-member SADC group is led by South Africa, which has been accused by Kinshasa of supporting Rwanda and Uganda. There have been allegations, denied on Monday by Pretoria, that South African nationals are smuggling arms to the rebels.

A political commentator close to the Zimbabwean government said Harare's main concern is stability in the region. She noted that two changes of government in less that two years in the DRC is "viewed with great concern". The negative impact on new-found Zimbabwean business in Kinshasa is also part of the policy equation, she added.

Military intervention on behalf of Kabila would, however, be unlikely. "I don't think anyone is going in to support him," she said.

Zimbabwe's regular military forces "would not be able to rise to the occasion in sufficient numbers" for deployment in the Congo, the defence consultant added. Angola on the other hand, has the airlift capacity to fly troops directly to Kinshasa. But Luanda's chief concern is the activities of the former rebel movement UNITA, and political sources in Luanda say it is not certain at the moment that Angola has thrown its support fully behind Kabila.

But Mugabe, chairman of SADC's ad-hoc defence and security committee, has taken a leading role in condemning "external intervention" in the DRC - believed to be a coded reference to Rwanda and Uganda. Articles in the state-owned 'Herald' newspaper have railed against "Tutsi empire-building" in the Great Lakes region.

"[Mugabe] has had very few friends lately and Kabila has become one of them. So he's talking in Kabila language at this stage - it's the official line," a regional analyst in Harare said. "Mugabe is looking for a role. We've been displaced by [South African President] Mandela with a bigger stature, economy and maybe coherent policy."

The foreign ministers' verification team emerged out of this month's Victoria Falls summit in Zimbabwe at which seven regional heads of state condemned foreign interference in the Congo crisis. South Africa was reportedly excluded from the meeting at the request of Kabila.

The South African foreign ministry and office of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki have however put out "feelers" to "various parties to hold an all-inclusive meeting within the week," political sources have told IRIN. Should nothing come of it, "we will speak to Kabila again," a South African official said. Foreign minister Nzo and defence minister Modise met Kabila in the southern city of Lubumbashi last weekend.

"We believe that some countries will play a larger role than others, but no one ... will be excluded in trying to find a peaceful solution," the official added.

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IRIN Update 486 for 24 Aug 1998.8.24

U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 486 for Central and Eastern Africa (Monday 24 August 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Setbacks and gains for the rebels

Rebel fighters of the Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD) apparently suffered setbacks on their western front, while reportedly making gains on the eastern front. The rebels admitted they had lost the western military base of Kitona after intervention by Zimbabwe and Angola in support of President Laurent-Desire Kabila. But a key member of the rebellion Bizima Karaha, quoted by Rwandan radio today (Monday) described the pullout from Kitona as a "tactical withdrawal". DRC government spokesman Didier Mumengi, in comments to AFP today, claimed the western towns of Muanda, Banana and Boma were back in government hands.

Bukavu radio yesterday (Sunday) announced that the rebels were pushing on towards Kinshasa, saying they had reached Kasanagulu, some 30 km south of the capital. The radio also confirmed the arrival of Angolan troops on the government side, entering DRC via the Cabinda enclave.

In the east the rebels announced the capture of DRC's third city, Kisangani, over the weekend. Rebel-controlled Radio Candip, broadcasting from Bunia, said the town fell yesterday. The radio added, however, that a negotiated settlement to the conflict was "preferable". Sources close to the RCD told IRIN the rebellion had been in the planning stages since early this year, as disenchantment with Kabila grew both inside and outside the country.

SADC calls for immediate ceasefire

A southern African regional summit yesterday called for an immediate ceasefire and peace talks in the DRC. The meeting, convened by South African President Nelson Mandela, urged both sides to freeze their military positions. However, the DRC government representative at the talks, Justice Minister Mwenze Kongolo, told Belgian RTBF radio that a ceasefire would be conditional on the withdrawal of Rwandan and Ugandan troops, Reuters reported.

The summit communique expressed its support for Kabila. But it called for an "all-inclusive national conference for all Congolese" and a "transitional government to lead the country to democratic elections" to be held "in a reasonable period of time," news agencies reported. The meeting mandated Mandela to organise the ceasefire in consultation with OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim, the South African news agency SAPA said. The initiative would "harmonise" with the Victoria Falls process in which Zimbabwe won backing for military support for Kabila from some Southern African Development Community (SADC) members. Mandela, as SADC chairman, said: "We have no worries at all that what we have decided here is not going to be supported by the entire region." An official response to yesterday's meeting is still awaited from Kabila. He was reportedly too sick to attend the meeting.

Proposals emerge from mini-summit

Eleven SADC heads of state were joined in Pretoria by Uganda's Yoweri Museveni, Rwanda's Pasteur Bizimungu and Daniel arap Moi of Kenya. The peace proposals emerged from a Mandela-chaired mini-summit on Saturday involving Museveni, Bizimungu and Kabila's representative Kongolo, AFP said. The rival parties reportedly did not meet face to face but exchanged notes.

Angola and Zimbabwe boycott

Noticeably absent from the SADC summit were the presidents of Angola and Zimbabwe. Both countries have troops fighting in the DRC. Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe's spokesman said yesterday a decision to intervene militarily was taken by SADC defence ministers in Harare last week, "and that decision is being implemented," SAPA reported. Zimbabwe was represented at the South African talks by its high commissioner. Mandela said absences were "not unusual" at summits called at such short notice.

Pretoria calls on Angola to sign up for initiative

Regional sources told IRIN that Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki telephoned Angolan leader Jose Eduardo dos Santos last night and urged him to support the South African initiative. They stressed that the alternative to a diplomatic solution risked dividing the region. Angola however had come under "heavy pressure from Mugabe" to back intervention, analysts said. Dos Santos was reportedly swayed by the argument that the rebels would not be able to unify the DRC and a balkanised Congo would benefit UNITA, the analysts added. An AFP dispatch yesterday said at least four Angolan fighter-bombers were seen on the runway at Kinshasa airport.

More Zimbabwean equipment arrives in Kinshasa

Meanwhile, defence analysts in Harare told IRIN Zimbabwe has stepped up its support for Kabila. On Sunday, a column of Brazilian-made armoured cars mounted with 90mm guns were seen entering the airport and are believed to have been airlifted to Kinshasa. There were also unconfirmed reports that Zimbabwean troops in jeeps have deployed outside Kinshasa in apparent preparation for an ambush against advancing rebels.

Tanzanian troops sent home

South Africa has provided transport planes to evacuate Tanzanian military instructors in the DRC ordered home by President Benjamin Mkapa. SAPA reported that two South African 707s had landed in Kinshasa yesterday. A Tanzanian government statement said 600 soldiers and 200 police training the DRC government's security forces were being pulled out to avoid being drawn into the Congo conflict, Reuters added.

Mozambique wants SADC backing for intervention

Mozambique's Prime Minister Pascoal Mocumbi said on Saturday that troops would not be sent to the DRC without SADC and OAU backing, PANA reported. He said "without direct coordination with other countries" Mozambique "has got no individual initiative to send a military force." Mozambique's defence minister attended last week's meeting in Harare at which the defence chiefs agreed military intervention.

Rwanda, Uganda warn they may take measures

On Friday, the Rwandan government said it "reserved the right to get involved" in the conflict. In a statment, it described Kabila's accusation of a Rwandan invasion as a "malicious and gratuitous lie". The statement urged an immediate ceasefire in DRC, stressing that stability in that country benefited not only Congo, but also its neighbours including Rwanda. It expressed regret over the decision by some SADC members to support Kabila militarily which "can only serve narrow interests of the leaders spearheading the intervention". "Rwanda, therefore, reserves the right to get involved and to assist the Congolese people in their search for a lasting solution in whatever manner it deems appropriate," the statement warned.

In a similar vein, President Yoweri Museveni on Saturday said Uganda "if unilateral intervention intensifies, may be forced...to take its own independent action in the protection of its own security interests". A press release from State House said the president noted that "consensus has not yet emerged" in the region. Appealing for restraint, Museveni pointed out Uganda wanted to stop Congo-based insurgencies against its territory. The statement added that Uganda's involvement in DRC was restricted to the presence of two army battalions in Congo to combat rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), and this had been agreed with Kabila's government.

Tshisekedi urges end to fighting

Veteran Congolese opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, breaking his silence about the conflict, has called for an immediate end to the fighting, Radio France Internationale reported yesterday. Tshisekedi, who leads the Union pour la democratie et le progres social (UDPS), said he had spoken to both sides in the conflict, and urged the international community to support his mission of mediation, the radio reported. Meanwhile, the radio added that another opposition leader Arthur Z'ahidi Ngoma was yesterday appointed deputy chairman of the RCD.

Growing numbers of refugees flee fighting

On the humanitarian front, aid workers report growing numbers of refugees fleeing the fighting in DRC. UNHCR said it had come across a group of 126 Congolese refugees in Angola, but they were apparently crossing at random points along the border and some were staying with friends so exact numbers were unclear. By Friday, 547 Congolese refugees had been registered in Tanzania's Kigoma region, and 2,700 had arrived in Burundi since the start of the fighting on 2 August. UNHCR said it had sent extra staff to Brazzaville in view of a possible influx of refugees from Kinshasa.

Nairobi, 24 August 1998, 14:15 gmt

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Weekly Round-Up - IRINCEA-35: 28-Aug-98

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Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Weekly Round-up 35-98 covering the period 21-27 Aug 1998

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Fighting rages around Kinshasa, Kisangani falls

Fighting raged around the DRC capital Kinshasa throughout the week as government forces, backed by Angola and Zimbabwe, sought to push back rebel gains. The rebel Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD) suffered setbacks on its western front, but reportedly made gains on the eastern front. The rebels admitted they lost the western military base of Kitona following the influx of Angolan and Zimbabwean troops to support President Laurent-Desire Kabila, but on Sunday they captured the country's third city, Kisangani, after government troops fled their advance. DRC government spokesman Didier Mumengi told AFP the towns of Muanda, Banana and Boma were back in government hands. Rebel forces also said they had taken the town of Kalemie on Lake Tanganyika in Katanga province. That claim has not been independently confirmed.

RCD chairman Ernest Wamba die Wamba accused Kabila of internationalising the conflict which he said could only be solved "politically and peacefully". He later sent a message to the Angolan government. seeking to reassure them that his movement was not in cahoots with UNITA. On Friday, the Rwandan government said it "reserved the right to get involved" in the conflict. In a statement, it described Kabila's accusation of a Rwandan invasion as a "malicious and gratuitous lie". The statement urged an immediate ceasefire. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said on Saturday Uganda "if unilateral intervention intensifies, may be forced... to take its own independent action in the protection of its own security interests." Rwanda on Wednesday accused Kabila of having a "genocide agenda" against the Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda people. Minister in the president's office Patrick Mazimhaka said over 100 bodies of ethnic Tutsis had been found in Kinshasa. "Rwanda could be driven into the Congo war if necessary, if Kabila pursues his agenda of exterminating people on the pretext that they are ethnic Tutsis," he warned, according to the Rwanda News Agency.

Kisangani not bombed, say residents

Residents in Kisangani told IRIN there had been no direct aerial bombardment of the town by Zimbabwean and Angolan fighter planes, as claimed by the rebel leadership. The sources said the town was calm and said the rebel troops were mostly made up of Rwandan, Banyamulenge and Katangese. The governor of Province Orientale, Doctor Yagi Sitolo, fled the rebel advance in a cargo plane. Other sources told IRIN fighting was also taking place in the southern town of Mbuji-Mayi after Rwandan troops were discovered there by government forces.

Meanwhile, an overnight curfew was imposed in Kinshasa where fighting raged for much of the week. DRC Information Minister Didier Mumengi went on state radio on Wednesday to urge the population to stay calm. He said an operation was underway to flush out rebel fighters hiding out in the city's outskirts. News reports told of heavy fighting around the airport, but said it was not clear "who had the upper hand". Mumengi said there had been a "turnaround in favour of our soldiers" while one of the main rebel leaders, Bizima Karaha, told news agencies rebel forces had attacked "Kinshasa airport and control certain parts of the city".

Ugandan, Rwandan troops captured

Ugandan and Rwandan troops were captured when Angolan forces, entering DRC from the Cabinda enclave, seized Kitona air base, Zimbabwean military sources were quoted as saying. According to a military briefing, the rebels on the western front number some 6,000 but an advance guard was halted by Zimbabwean troops 100 km west of Kinshasa near Madimba. Harare says the next target for the multinational force was the Inga dam, the hydro-electric power station on the Congo river.

Vatican claims over 200 killed in east

The Vatican claimed 207 people were massacred in eastern DRC after an attack on a Roman Catholic mission in Kazika near Uvira. Italian missionaries and the Vatican have blamed the attack on Banyamulenge. They say more bodies may be lying scattered in the bush. Earlier press reports spoke of 37 Congolese, including a priest and three nuns, being murdered in the attack. Meanwhile, Rwandan radio reported the alleged discovery of mass graves of Banyamulenge and Rwandans near Kisangani.

Zimbabwe rejects withdrawal call

IRIN Update 496 for 7 Sep 1998.9.7

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IRIN Update No. 496 for Central and Eastern Africa (Monday 7 September 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Conflicting sides meet in Zimbabwe Talks aimed at finding a peaceful settlement of the Congo conflict began in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe today (Monday). News reports quoted Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma of the rebel Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD) as saying on arrival there would be no ceasefire before a political resolution of the conflict. All sides involved in the war, including DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila, are represented at Victoria Falls. The RDC's foreign affairs representative, Bizima Karaha, is also a member of the rebel delegation. Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, on arrival in Zimbabwe today, predicted a "solution to the conflict", AP reported. Zambian President Frederick Chiluba was nominated as the neutral chairman of the talks.

Regional economies suffering

The conflict in the DRC is having an increasingly negative impact on the economies of neighbouring countries, primarily due to loss of trade and tourism earnings, the 'EastAfrican' weekly newspaper reported today. Since the outbreak of the conflict, Tanzanian businessmen have suspended export orders to the DRC worth over US $2.2 million, Air Tanzania has stopped its profitable twice-weekly Dar es Salaam-Lubumbashi flights, and the thriving cross-border trade through the ports of Kalemie and Uvira has virtually ceased, the 'EastAfrican' reported. As the DRC constitutes an important market for Ugandan products, Uganda will lose between 20-30 percent of its total external trade if the war does not end soon, the newspaper said. The war has already harmed Uganda's tourism industry, according to the newspaper.

UGANDA: ADF rebels killed, army says

The Ugandan army said it had killed 36 rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) at Busaru in the western Bundibugyo district and in nearby Kasese over the weekend, the state-owned 'New Vision' reported today. On Thursday, the Ugandan parliament voted against a motion to order a government ceasefire with rebel groups, but agreed to set up a reconciliation commission.

RWANDA: Rebels storm prison Rebel infiltrators stormed a prison in Kivumu commune, western Kibuye prefecture on Friday, freeing a number of inmates, Rwandan radio, monitored by the BBC, reported yesterday (Sunday). Government troops reportedly killed 70 of the freed prisoners, while another 140 turned themselves in. A number of rebels were also reported killed. The jail housed about 380 prisoners, the radio said. An estimated 800 rebels, from hideouts in the nearby Mukura forest, were involved in the attack. The rebels also hacked to death 21 civilians in Ndaro village, according to an army spokesman.

WFP suspends operations in Ruhengeri

WFP has suspended food distributions in Ruhengeri following a fatal landmine accident on Friday, a WFP spokesperson told IRIN today. One person was killed and a driver seriously injured when a five-vehicle convoy drove over the mine. WFP, which normally organises between three and five food distributions a week in the area, said it was sending a security assessment mission to the area tomorrow to decide the fate of future operations. "We do not know who is responsible for this grave incident, but we request the authorities to investigate," Gerard van Dijk, a WFP representative in Rwanda, was quoted as saying.

BURUNDI: Bubanza curfew extended

A curfew imposed in the northwest Bubanza province has been extended for security reasons, Burundi radio reported on Saturday. The curfew will now come into effect at 21:00 (local) instead of at midnight. The measure is intended to "facilitate patrol work by the security forces," the radio said.

SUDAN: New appeals issued for flood emergency in north and east

The government of Sudan has appealed for US $19.5 million from the international community to help respond to emergency needs resulting from heavy rains and flooding in the northern and eastern parts of the country, the Sudan News Agency (SUNA) reported. Hussein al-Obeid, Sudan's Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid, was reported as stating that the funds would be used to provide shelter, food and health services for flood-affected people.

The IFRC, in a statement received by IRIN today, warned that the number of flood-affected people is rising rapidly and that, with the rainy season just starting, the emergency could continue for another three months. The IFRC is appealing for an additional 3,000,000 Swiss francs to help 95,500 people in the north and east, and to assist in preventing epidemics of infectious diseases in affected areas.

Water-borne diseases compounding famine emergency in south The ICRC has warned that water-borne diseases in southern Sudan could be as deadly as the on-going famine there. In a press statement, received by IRIN, the ICRC said that many boreholes and other drinking water sources have been destroyed by fighting in southern Sudan and that human corpses have been thrown into open wells to contaminate them. Lack of access to drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities leads to outbreaks of deadly diseases, such as diarrhoea and dysentery, and it also jeopardises the recovery of famine victims, the ICRC stated. Meanwhile, WFP reported that the government of Sudan has given it permission to fly humanitarian aid to all locations requested by OLS southern sector for the month of September.

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IRIN Update No. 498 for Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 9 September 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Loyalists retake Kalemie

Government forces are reported to have retaken the town of Kalemie with Angolan air support. Refugees arriving in Kigoma after fleeing across Lake Tanganyika yesterday (Tuesday) reportedly told humanitarian sources Angolan soldiers also took part in the fighting. Independent military sources, however, told IRIN they had been unable to confirm the participation of Angolan forces and expressed scepticism over the reports. Yesterday, rebel soldiers said some 25 people had been killed in a raid by an Angolan warplane.

Humanitarian sources also told IRIN news of the recapture of Kalemie sparked celebrations among loyalist forces in Kinshasa. Meanwhile, Radio France Internationale reported Minister of State to the Presidency Pierre-Victor Mpoyo as denying any foreign aircraft were used to bombard Kalemie. "There were no Angolan aircraft. The bases are too far away. There were no Zimbabwean aircraft. They were our own aircraft which are capable of bombarding Kalemie," he told the radio. The government said it had also bombed Lubutu and that an air base at Kindu had been used for both operations. Mpoyo also ruled out peace talks with the rebels, saying his government would not talk to "bandits".

For its part, the rebel Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD) said its forces were now advancing on Kindu and were within "a few hours" of taking the strategic eastern town. AFP reported Political Coordinator Lunda Bululu, a former prime minister under the late dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, as saying Goma, Kisangani, and other rebel-held towns in the east were "within range of any Zimbabwean or Angolan warplanes using the Kindu field".

Meanwhile, the Rwanda News Agency says rumours of an imminent counter-offensive by government troops in eastern DRC have "seriously affected" security in the region. People are reportedly hiding in forests, particularly in the Bunia area. Radio Bukavu quoted the town's army commander Cyuma Barumisa as telling people not to harbour criminals in their homes. He claimed certain people were paying Mayi-Mayi insurgents to "perturb security" in the town, but many Mayi-Mayi had been killed or captured. "Those harbouring them who are caught will not be imprisoned, they will be immediately executed," he warned.

Sudan reported supporting Kabila

Diplomatic and military sources told IRIN today (Wednesday) they had received reports, Sudan has been flying military supplies from the southern capital of Juba to the forces of DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila and his allies in the northeast town of Isiro and in the area of Dungu. One source said military transport planes, apparently bound for DRC, had left Juba for five consecutive days. It has not been possible to confirm the reports, but regional analysts pointed out Kabila had enjoyed warm relations with Khartoum long before the current outbreak of fighting. "Sudan has emerged as a big winner from this latest outbreak of fighting," one analyst told IRIN. He stressed Uganda was unable to control its borders with Sudan and DRC and therefore was not in a position to aid Sudanese rebels. Both Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame, who helped Kabila come to power, boycotted last May's first anniversary of his victory, partly in anger over an invitation to the event of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.

In an apparently related development, the Ugandan press today quoted Museveni as saying Uganda had now taken control of airports and landing strips in eastern DRC to stop the Sudanese government using the facilities. The semi-official daily newspaper the 'New Vision' reported Museveni told some 200 parliamentarians he was not ready to leave the region until he received assurances from Kabila that neither Ugandan rebels nor the Sudanese military would use the facilities for attacks against Kampala.

Meanwhile, the Belgian Flemish daily 'De Standaard' reported mercenary troops from South Africa were also now helping Kabila. The paper said eyewitnesses first reported seeing them in Manono, Kabila's home town, about two weeks ago. A senior South African government source said there had been no verification of the report which said the mercenaries were well-equipped with automatic weapons, 4x4 vehicles, hi-tech radio equipment, and infra-red spy-glasses.

Rwandan president warns war possible

Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu has stated that the DRC government's support for "genocidaires" would be a reason for Rwanda to declare war on DRC, Rwandan radio reported yesterday. Bizimungu was speaking in Kigali on his return from a regional summit at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. Defence ministers of countries involved in the DRC war are due to meet in Addis Ababa tomorrow. Southern African leaders meeting in Mauritius for an SADC summit will also discuss peace efforts for DRC, South African President Nelson Mandela said, according to SAPA news agency. Regional analysts told IRIN that Kabila was likely to arm all Kigali's opponents, including ex-FAR and Interahamwe, in retaliation for Rwanda's support of the latest Tutsi-inspired rebellion.

Rebels to expand operations

Meanwhile, the rebels announced they were "launching operations everywhere". Rebel commander Jean-Pierre Ondekane told reporters in rebel-held Kisangani yesterday that the offensive would continue, after the failure of the Victoria Falls summit. AFP said he denied claims that Uganda had sent tanks to Kisangani to help the rebels capture the town, adding that the rebellion had "arrangements with other countries" for the supply of war equipment.

Aid workers visit eastern DRC

Humanitarian sources told IRIN today that some aid agencies had been able to cross from Rwanda into the rebel-held towns of Bukavu and Goma. They reported the humanitarian situation in both towns was stable, with medical facilities functioning and the prices of some basic foodstuffs decreasing. Limited population displacement was reported in Goma and the town's hospital was mainly receiving war-wounded patients. The current security situation is reported as calm although heavy shooting was heard this week in Bukavu. Some reports say the shooting was a military exercise. Humanitarian sources also underlined the critical water situation in Kisangani, the capital of Province Orientale.

More refugees waiting to cross to Tanzania

Congolese refugees arriving in western Tanzania have declared that "thousands" of people were trying to flee South Kivu to seek refuge in the

Kigoma region, according to humanitarian sources. They said the lack of boats to cross Lake Tanganyika and the US$ 10 per person fee requested by the boats' operators were preventing many families from leaving. Congolese who have relatives on the Tanzanian side of the lake have also been integrated into local communities.

Over 200 die when boats capsize

Over 200 people died when their boats capsized on Lake Kivu last Wednesday, Radio Bukavu reported yesterday. The two boats were heading towards Idjwi island and were caught up in strong winds. The accident was due to overloading, the radio said.

SUDAN: OLS details new measures

OLS and the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA) today announced they are taking new measures to help ensure relief food reaches the neediest people in famine-stricken Bahr el Ghazal region. The new measures are a result of a three-week assessment in SPLM-controlled areas of Bahr el Ghazal. The assessment, conducted by a joint task force comprising UN, NGO, SRRA and SPLM representatives, found that some of the neediest people in the region were being excluded from the food distribution process due to a number of factors. Among the factors identified was that previously-functioning systems of relief distribution had broken down under the stress of the famine and increased levels of food aid inputs. In an OLS/SRRA press statement released today, the task force said the practice of food "redistribution" by local chiefs had contributed to the problem. The re-distribution also involves giving a portion of the food as a community contribution to the authorities, the task force stated.

The measures announced to help address the problem include increasing the number of WFP field staff, setting up additional wet feeding centres where food is prepared for immediate consumption, and registering all misuses of food aid. In serious or repeated cases of misappropriation, further relief assistance could be withheld. "Abuses will not be tolerated," WFP regional director Mike Sackett said.

BURUNDI: More flee fighting

Humanitarian sources today detailed to IRIN the recent influx of Burundian refugees to western Tanzania. According to UNHCR, 2,167 Burundian refugees have arrived in Kigoma region since the 8 August. They are said to be in a very poor condition as some of them have spent weeks in hiding before fleeing. OCHA reports that, as 1 September, Tanzania hosted some 272,000 Burundian refugees in Ngara and Kigoma regions.

KENYA: Kenya de-registers six Islamic NGOs

The Kenyan government has de-registered six international Islamic NGOs following the August bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi, Kenyan radio and television reported yesterday. The de-registered organisations include Mercy Relief International Agency, whose premises were raided soon after the bombing by American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Kenyan Criminal Investigation Department (CID) officials. Others are the Al-Haramid Foundation, Help Africa People, International Islamic Relief Organisation, Ibrahim bin Abdulla Asiz al-Ibrahim Foundation and Islabid Efraim al-Islam.

Nairobi, 9 September 1998 15:00 GMT

[ENDS]

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Message-Id: <199809091630.TAA12100@ocha.unon.org> Date: Wed, 9 Sep 1998 18:48:18 +0300 (GMT+0300) From: IRIN - Central and Eastern Africa Subject: Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Update 498 for 9 Sep 1998.9.9

Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

IRIN Update 501 for 12-14 Sep 1998.9.14

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IRIN Update No. 501 for Central and Eastern Africa (Saturday 12 - Monday 14 September 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Heavy fighting reported in Goma

Heavy fighting broke out in Goma today (Monday) at about 3 am, humanitarian sources and news agencies reported. The fighting, which lasted about five hours and involved automatic weapons fire and mortar fire, was heard in the centre of the town and near the airport. AP said the attack on Goma was launched by DRC government forces backed by Mayi-Mayi warriors and Rwandan Hutu Interhamwe militia, but DRC rebel political leader Ernest Wamba dia Wamba told AFP "we don't know" who was attacking. Rebel-held radio in Goma, which went off the air briefly during the fighting, resumed broadcasting at about 9 am, saying that rebel forces had defeated unspecified "enemies" and instructing the local population not to panic.

In other military developments, the DRC government over the weekend claimed to have re-captured the towns of Ubundu, Shabunda and Kamitunga from rebel forces, AFP reported. However, these claims were disputed by the rebels, who also denied earlier government and other claims regarding Kalemie on lake Tanganyika falling to loyalists. AFP reported Kinshasa authorities as saying that the DRC army and its allies had installed their forward headquarters in the town of Kindu in Maniema province. Meanwhile, rebel military leader Jean-Pierre Ondekane said on Saturday that he had moved his military headquarters from Goma to Kisangani.

DRC state television, monitored by the BBC, accused the rebels of recruiting mercenaries from Serbia, Colombia, Somalia and South Africa. Rebel forces, meanwhile, told AFP that they had killed a "white man" fighting on the side of government forces near Lubutu.

Hutu rebels allegedly trained in Sudan

The "East African" weekly newspaper reported today on claims that some 2,800 Rwandan and Ugandan Hutu rebels were being trained at three camps in southern Sudan as part of the government of Sudan's support to Kabila. The newspaper quoted the director of Ugandan's External Security Organisation as saying that the training of the Hutu youth was part of a "Sudan-Congo conspiracy", which also involved joint support for Ugandan rebel groups, including the LRA. The "East African" reported an official of the Sudanese Embassy in Nairobi as denying the allegations. Last week, the Brussels-based Le Soir newspaper reported that 2,000 Sudanese soldiers were sent to the DRC to support Kabila's army.

Meanwhile, DRC rebels helped UNITA to capture Maquela do Zombo, a town in the Uige Province of northern Angola, the Chinese news agency, quoting the 'Journal of Angola' reported on Saturday.

OAU talks fail, SADC summit begins

OAU-sponsored peace talks, which began on Thursday in Addis Ababa, ended on Saturday morning without agreement on a cease-fire in the DRC, news agencies reported. The talks, chaired by the Zambian defence minister, included ministers from the DRC, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Uganda and Rwanda. News reports indicate that participants were divided over the issue of rebel participation in the negotiations, with the Ugandan and Rwandan delegations reportedly walking out of the talks after failing to convince the other delegates to allow the Congolese rebels to participate.

Heads of state or representatives of 14 African countries, are meeting at the SADC annual summit in Mauritius. The summit of the Southern African Development Community was opened by South African President Nelson Mandela on Sunday, and President Kabila was reported to have arrived there this morning. Envoys from Uganda and Rwanda, not members of SADC, were reportedly invited to participate in the portions of the summit dealing with the DRC crisis. Meanwhile, the DRC, which joined SADC on a probationary basis last year, has now become a full member of the regional group, RFI reported today.

Kabila visits Chad, Gabon and CAR to garner support

Before travelling to the Mauritius meeting, Kabila visited Chad, Gabon and the Central African Republic in a bid to garner additional support from regional leaders, news agencies reported. On Friday, President Idriss Deby of Chad pledged his country's "unconditional support" to Kabila, while Gabonese President Omar Bongo on Saturday condemned the "occupation" of the DRC by foreign troops. Bongo said he planned to convene a summit of central African countries in the coming days during which he would reveal "peace mechanisms" for the DRC, news agencies reported.

EU envoy on "fact-finding" mission

EU Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Aldo Ajello, travelling in the region on a fact-finding mission on the DRC crisis, met Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe on Friday and discussed options for restoring peace in the country, the South African Press Agency (SAPA) reported. The EU envoy has also visited Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda and Kinshasa as part of his fact-finding mission, SAPA added.

Matadi road reopens as Kinshasa power out again

Electricity was again cut in Kinshasa late yesterday (Sunday), only a few days after a month- long disruption of power in the capital had ended. Authorities blamed the latest blackout on technical problems unrelated to the war, Reuters reported. Meanwhile, Congolese TV monitored by the BBC on Friday night reported that the road between Kinshasa and the port town of Matadi in Bas-Congo province had re-opened, under army protection. Five ships carrying goods and drugs had berthed at the port of Matadi, and the first buses and trucks form Matadi arrived in Kinshasa on Saturday, news agencies reported. WFP has so far airlifted 100 mt of food aid from Pointe-Noire to Kinshasa, for distribution to vulnerable groups in the city.

The UN Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, is in Kinshasa. An OCHA official told IRIN he is discussing with the authorities "issues of humanitarian concern including access to populations in need of humanitarian aid throughout the DRC."

SUDAN: Yei hospital bombed

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) announced a hospital it runs in Yei, southern Sudan was the target of a bombing raid on Sunday in which one person was killed and 22 injured. An NPA spokesman, speaking to Reuters, alleged the 12-bomb attack was made by an Antonov aircraft of Khartoum government's air force. Twelve people were killed in a similar attack on March 5 this year.

Libya, Egypt deliver aid

Large areas of northern Sudan are affected by flooding of the Nile. Early estimates speak of 100,000 people being affected, according to OCHA. Two aircraft carrying humanitarian aid including medicines, blankets, tents and food from Libya to Sudan arrived in Dunqulah, northern Sudan at the weekend, according to Libyan state radio. The flight, according to Sudanese TV is a "direct challenge to the UN sanctions imposed on Libya" which placed an embargo on flights to and from Libya. Libya had last month delivered medicines by air to Sudan after the US bombing of the Shifa pharmaceutical plant, news agencies report. Map: http://www.expediamaps.com/results.asp?Place=Dunqulah

Egypt sent flights on Friday and today (Monday) of tents, food, medicine and jute sacks for making sandbags. Today's flight carried a team of doctors, Reuters reports. Sudan made an emergency appeal for US $20 million last week in response to the floods.

Pro-government factions clash

Clashes between southern factions led by Riek Machar and Paulino Mateb in the Bentiu area have resulted in "serious human losses and material damage" AP reports. Both Machar and Mateb joined the pro-government southern coalition in April 1997.

CORRECTION: Sudanese displaced near Kassala

In last Friday's IRIN Weekly Roundup 37-98, a typo substituted Kampala for Kassala in an item about displaced Sudanese people, which also mispelled Eritrea. IRIN regrets the error.

REMINDER: Information meeting in Nairobi on Wednesday

The weekly OCHA Information Exchange Meeting is to take place at 10 am at the OCHA/IRIN meeting room, UN Avenue, off Limuru Rd, Nairobi on Wednesday 16 September.

Nairobi, 14 August 1998, 15:50

[ENDS]

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Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

IRIN Update 503 for 16 Sep 1998.9.16

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IRIN Update No. 503 for Central and Eastern Africa (16 September 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Refugee influx to Tanzania continues

News agencies have reported heavy fighting in rebel-held Kalemie on lake Tanganyika. AFP said 100 DRC government soldiers fleeing the Kalemie clashes had arrived in Kigoma, Tanzania. Meanwhile, UN sources said 398 Congolese refugees arrived yesterday in Kigoma, most from the Kalemie area. Yesterday's refugee influx brought the total number of new Congolese arrivals in Kigoma to 5,333 since the start of the DRC rebellion in August.

Rebels claim Sudan supporting Kabila at Kindu

Rebel leaders claimed yesterday (Tuesday) that Sudan had sent 2,000 of its soldiers to Kindu, Maniema province, to help DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila and his allies, news agencies reported. Reports since 3 September have alleged Sudanese involvement in the conflict. The chief of staff of the Forces armees congolais (FAC) has "categorically denied" the allegation, AFP reported today. Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail told the news agency that his country's support for Kabila was "political". Kindu is the government's forward military headquarters in the east.

Ugandan involvement in DRC rebellion refuted

President Yoweri Museveni today reconfirmed the presence of Ugandan troops within DRC territory, but said they were not fighting. "We are just watching" to preserve Ugandan security, he told parliamentarians. In his speech, reported by AP, he criticized foreign involvement in the DRC, calling it "ideologically repugnant". He added "Rwanda installed Kabila in power. Now it's Angola ... It's amazing now to hear him say that the Rwandans are aggressors."

Ugandan senior presidential advisor John Nagenda challenged DRC authorities who allege active Ugandan involvement in the DRC rebellion to capture Ugandan troops and show them publicly. Nagenda told IRIN that Uganda was "absolutely not" fighting alongside the rebels. He acknowledged, however, that Uganda was "extremely sympathetic" to Rwandan security concerns. He said that there was "worry" and "disappointment" in Uganda with Kabila's alleged association with the Interahamwe and other forces behind the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Kabila appoints former Mobutu generals to lead offensive

Kabila has appointed four generals who served under former president Mobutu Sese Seko to command forces in the southeast, state media reported. Marcelin Lukama Musikami was appointed chief of staff for the southeast sector and Mulimbi Mabilo was made commander of operations, while Ngwala Panzu and Bekazwa Bakundulo were appointed deputy commanders, the Congolese Press Agency reported yesterday.

Cholera problem rising in Shabunda

Cholera is becoming a serious problem in South Kivu, humanitarian sources report. There has been a substantial increase in the number of cholera cases in Shabunda and other areas of the province, with a sharp rise in mortality rates reported. Efforts to combat the epidemic have been hampered by a shortage of cholera drugs and restricted access to affected areas.

Future of war-disrupted polio eradication campaign discussed

Ministry of health officials, with UN and other partners are examining options for salvaging DRC's planned national polio immunization campaign, put off at the start of the rebellion. The campaign, which had been scheduled to start on 20 August, aimed to vaccinate about 10 million children under five years of age against polio, as part of global efforts to eradicate the disease. To help prevent millions of vaccine doses from spoiling during the recent three-week power outage in Kinshasa, UNICEF provided health authorities with fuel to run generators at the central refrigerated vaccine storage room in the capital.

SUDAN: Khartoum claims Ugandan troops involved in offensive

The Sudanese army claimed today (Wednesday) that 50 rebel Sudanese fighters and Ugandan army troops had been killed in "fierce battles" in Equatoria. The statement on state radio said that attacks "by Ugandan enemy troops backed by pockets of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) forces" took place at Liria, Torit and al-Gabalein. The three locations are to the south and southeast of Juba. A senior advisor to Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, John Nagenda, denied the allegations to IRIN, saying "we don't fight on foreign soil." Uganda, Nagenda said, had "sympathies for what the SPLA stands for," but said the Sudanese would have to "do it themselves".

The Khartoum army statement confirms the outbreak of fighting reported in IRIN Update 502 and the breakdown of a unilateral ceasefire declared by Khartoum on 3 August in all of southern Sudan. The SPLA is observing a ceasefire in Bahr al-Ghazal province only. Map: http://www.expediamaps.com/results.asp?Place=Torit

Humanitarian concern about Western Upper Nile

WFP is concerned at the humanitarian situation of people in Western Upper Nile. Fighting between different pro-Khartoum southern factions in the Bentiu area has virtually cut off the area from humanitarian access. A security and needs assessment was called off last week due to insecurity and flooding. Only a third of a planned 1,200 mt of food deliveries for August was completed. WFP told IRIN that clashes continue in Mankien, while a Khartoum newspaper this week claimed as many as 400 people may have been killed in fighting between the Paulino Mateb and a faction allied to Riek Machar. An MSF spokeswoman agreed that the Upper Nile area was an area of "huge" concern.

RWANDA: Displaced camps a "disaster waiting to happen"

Numbers of displaced people in northwestern Rwanda are on the rise. At the end of August, an OCHA report estimated 150,000 people in Gisenyi and 95,000 in Ruhengeri were displaced. Today, an aid official told IRIN the official figures for displaced people in Ruhengeri alone had risen to

185,000. The director of CONCERN in Rwanda, Anne O'Mahony, told IRIN that the displaced people were generally sheltering in commune buildings, guarded by the army. The situation of the displaced people is "a disaster waiting to happen", said O'Mahony. Three sites, Kinigi, Gatonde and Cyeru each hold more than 25,000 people, while 14-15 smaller sites account for the rest. Many of the sites lack social services, shelter and clean water. As the rainy season approaches, the outlook is "fairly bleak" and needs for plastic sheeting and other supplies are becoming urgent. UN food aid deliveries to Ruhengeri have been suspended for the last ten days, after a convoy hit a landmine last weekend, killing one passenger.

The displacement follows a "hearts and minds campaign" to bring civilians out of the forests and areas under rebel control and back to the government-held side in the conflict zone, aid workers say. However, the recent increase in numbers comes as a result of increased insecurity. "Hutu and Tutsi alike feel threatened up there", said O'Mahony.

Three soldiers face death sentence

A Rwandan army officer and his two bodyguards have been sentenced to death for the murder of two women. The two sisters were killed on August 23 when they tried to reclaim a house occupied by the soldiers which belonged to their brother. The three soldiers have 30 days in which to appeal, Radio Rwanda reported.

BURUNDI: Thousands arrive from DRC

Over 5,500 people have arrived in Burundi's northwestern Cibitoke region, fleeing fighting in the DRC, OCHA Burundi reports. UNHCR figures indicate that 5,586 people had arrived by 11 September, of whom 1,729 were Burundians returning home. Most of the new arrivals were staying in temporary sites, while UNHCR provides return packages to the Burundians, OCHA reports.

Nairobi, 16 August 1998, 15:55 GMT

[ENDS]

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Date: Wed, 16 Sep 1998 18:56:23 -0300 (GMT+3) From: IRIN - Central and Eastern Africa <irin@ocha.unon.org> Subject: Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Update 503 for 16 Sep 1998.9.16 Message-ID: <Pine.LNX.3.95.980916185438.11543t-100000@amahoro.dha.unon.org>

Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu

IRIN Update 504 for 17 Sep 1998.9.17

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IRIN Update No. 504 for Central and Eastern Africa (Thursday 17 September 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Kabila's forces "unaware" of massacres

Rwandan troops backing the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) killed thousands of Hutu refugees in eastern DRC and Mbandaka between October 1996 and June 1997, but the ADFL was at first unaware that the massacres were taking place, a DRC state minister said. In an interview with the French newspaper 'Liberation' published today (Thursday), State Minister Victor Mpoyo said that Rwandan troops did not allow ADFL soldiers to enter the zones where the massacres were taking place. Mpoyo added the obstacles encountered by the UN human rights investigation were the result of the refusal of the DRC's then Rwandan army chief of staff to grant UN investigators access to massacre sites.

Kabila pledges to hold elections in eight months

President Laurent-Desire Kabila yesterday (Wednesday) announced that general elections in the DRC would be held as planned in April 1999, but only if Ugandan and Rwandan "aggressors" leave the country before then. He was speaking yesterday (Wednesday) before a crowd of some 30,000 people gathered at Kinshasa's Ndjili area.

News agencies reported Kabila as telling the crowd that Ugandan forces were present in Kisangani and Bunia while Rwandan troops were in Goma and Bukavu. To combat the rebellion, Kabila said an additional 25,000 "young people" would be enrolled in the DRC army and that weapons would be distributed to popular defence forces to be established in Kinshasa, news agencies reported.

Journalists say rebels still control Kalemie

Journalists flown by rebel forces from Goma to Kalemie yesterday reported that the town remains firmly in rebel hands and that there was no visible sign of fighting. Kinshasa this week repeated earlier claims that government forces had attacked the town and were about to re-capture it. "How many times are they going to take Kalemie?," regional rebel commander Jean-Claude Moluka told Reuters. News agencies also reported that most of the civilian population in Kalemie had fled the town at the beginning of the hostilities and that food had become scarce for the local population.

Southern African allies to maintain military support for Kabila

Zimbabwe's Defense Minister Moven Mahachi said yesterday that Zimbabwe and the DRC's two other southern African allies, Namibia and Angola, would continue supporting Kabila militarily until peace is secured in the country, news agencies reported. Speaking to Zimbabwe's parliament, Mahachi justified the deployment of 3,000 Zimbabwean troops to the DRC on the principle of not allowing "a legitimate government to be removed by force of arms," Reuters quoted him as saying. The PANA news agency yesterday quoted Namibian President Sam Nujoma as saying troops from his country would remain in the Congo "as long as Kabila want them to stay."

'New Vision': SPLA troops moved to DRC border

Uganda's 'New Vision' newspaper, meanwhile, reported yesterday that the SPLA had moved troops to the Sudan-DRC border to stop the Sudan government from establishing a base within the DRC. An SPLA spokesman, however, declined to comment on that claim. DRC rebel leaders this week alleged that Khartoum, with Libyan financial assistance, had sent troops to Kindu in support of Kabila, a claim denied by both the Sudanese and DRC governments.

Involvement of Burundian rebels alleged

DRC rebels allege the involvement of Burundian Hutu rebels in support of Kabila's forces. A rebel commander told Reuters yesterday that a number of fighters from the Forces pour la defense de la democratie (FDD) had been captured in recent days in South Kivu. A Burundi analyst told IRIN today that the current situation represents a "rather spectacular and potentially lethal reversal of alliances". On rumoured tensions between the Burundian military and civilian authorities, he said, "if there is sufficient evidence that the 'bandes armees' [Hutu-dominated rebel groups] are indeed joining the fray in South Kivu on Kabila's side, Buyoya would have a hard time reining in the hard-liners in the army."

Meanwhile, Burundi's Minister of Communication and official government spokesperson, Luc Rukingama, has rejected allegations that Burundian government troops are involved in the DRC conflict on the side of the rebels. In a statement received by IRIN today, Rukingama refuted the allegation made by Belgium's Minister of Foreign Affairs, as reported by AFP on Tuesday.

Chiluba pursues SADC mediation efforts

Zambian President Frederick Chiluba is scheduled to visit Kigali and Kampala on 19 September as part of regional efforts to negotiate a cease-fire and political settlement between DRC's warring parties, Reuters reported. He will hold talks with Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, it added. The summit of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) held in Mauritius earlier this week had mandated Chiluba to continue efforts aimed at ending the war in the DRC. Chiluba is viewed as a regional leader who has remained neutral in the current crisis.

US Congress briefed on DRC crisis

The crisis in the DRC has become an "unprecedented regionalized war" that is threatening the lives of "millions" of people, a senior US official told a Congressional committee. With armies from at least six countries now fighting on DRC territory, the conflict is "potentially among the most dangerous" in the world, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice said in her 15 September statement to the US House of Representatives sub-committee on Africa.

Rice said there were "credible reports" of inter-ethnic violence, communal massacres and attacks against non-combatants committed by both rebel and government forces since the start of the crisis and that "hundreds, if not thousands" of Congolese ethnic Tutsis had been detained by DRC security forces. The military intervention of Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe in support of Kabila was "destabilising," Rice said in her statement,

adding that Rwanda and Uganda had not revealed the "full extent" of their own involvement inside the country.

UN relief official to brief agencies in Nairobi

UN Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths will brief humanitarian agencies in Nairobi on his recent mission to the DRC and Rwanda. The meeting will be held on Friday September 18, at 17:00 at the OCHA compound on United Nations Avenue, Gigiri, Nairobi.

SUDAN: Government troops mutiny - rebel radio

A battalion of pro-government troops mutinied and joined the forces of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), rebel radio reported. The Arabic service of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), a rebel umbrella group including the SPLA, said that 1,000 fighters from the Popular Defence Forces led by a lieutenant-colonel joined the rebels in the southern Blue Nile area.

Nuba mountains aid effort "futile"

The limited humanitarian efforts underway in the Nuba Mountains are of central Sudan are "an exercise in futility", a report published by a Catholic news service based in Nairobi stated today. The Africanews newsletter reports that "every time the sound of an aircraft is heard, people, both the young and the old, rush to the airstrip, hoping to get at least a handful of dura." The aid efforts are hampered by cost, lack of transport and no permission from Khartoum for UN access, the report says. Food prices are said to be high: a malwa (a 3kg measuring bowl) of cereal is retailing for 4,000 Sudanese pounds (about US $2).

LANDMINES: Bukina sets seal on international landmine ban

(IRIN - West Africa) - Burkina Faso today became the 40th nation to ratify the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines. Statements by UN agencies said Burkina's signature would now enable the treaty to become binding under international law by 1 March 1999. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said: "Today, the world has taken a step toward becoming a safer and more humane place."

Although the treaty was signed last December by 130 nations, UN officials pointed out at the time that it had to be ratified by 40 nations and their parliaments before it could come into force. It requires countries to stop the use and production of landmines, destroy the stockpiles over the next four years, and clear mined areas within the next 10 years. UNICEF Executive Director, Carol Bellamy, said that by ratifying the treaty, the 40 nations had ushered in a new humanitarian ethical standard to end "indiscriminate cruelty" caused by mines and hasten their elimination.

The world's major landmine producing nations, The United States, China and Russia, have so far refused to ratify the Ottawa Convention. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said that the adoption of the Ottawa Convention following Burkina's ratification marked the first time in history that a weapon in widespread use had been outlawed.

Nairobi, 17 August 1998, 16:10 GMT

[ENDS]

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IRIN Weekly Round-Up 38-98 1998.9.18

U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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[The weekly roundup is based on IRIN daily updates and other relevant information from UN agencies, NGOs, governments, donors and the media. IRIN issues these reports for the benefit of the humanitarian community, but accepts no responsibility as to the accuracy of the original sources.]

Central and Eastern Africa: IRIN Weekly Round-up 38-98 covering the period 12-18 Sep 1998.9.18

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Conflict "threatens millions" says US official

Fighting continued in the Democratic Republic of Congo this week despite new attempts to secure peace and a senior US official warned that the conflict was potentially "among the most dangerous in the world". US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice told a Congressional committee on Tuesday that the crisis in the DRC had become an unprecented regionalised war that threatened the lives of millions of people. Rice described the military intervention of Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe in support of DRC President Laurent-Desire Kabila as "destabilising" and added that Rwanda and Uganda had not revealed the full extent of their own involvement.

Rice said there were credible reports of communal massacres and attacks against non-combatants committed by both rebel and government forces and "hundreds, if not thousands" of Congolese ethnic Tutsis had been detained by DRC security forces. Earlier this week a South Kivu-based party, Les Forces republicaines et federalistes (FRF), warned that Congolese Tutsis are threatened with "extermination" in the DRC and accused the international community of abandoning them. Human rights organisations in the DRC also criticised the "absense of concrete measures" by the UN Security Council in response to the current crisis in the DRC and called on the Congolese people not to give in to xenophobic sentiments.

Little progress made in peace efforts

The annual summit of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) ended on Monday in Maritius without making any significant progress on ending the conflict, news agencies reported . The summit, attended by the heads of state or representatives of 14 African countries, "recognised the legitimacy" of the military intervention of Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia but did not condemn SADC non-members Rwanda and Uganda for any "aggression" against the DRC. Zambian President Frederick Chiluba, mandated by the summit to continue efforts to negotiate a ceasefire and political settlement, is scheduled to visit Kigali and Kampala on 19 September for talks with Rwandan and Ugandan leaders, Reuters reported. The OAU-sponsored peace talks in Addis Ababa ended last weekend without agreement on a cease-fire. Ugandan and Rwandan delegations reportedly walked out of the talks after failing to convince other delegates to allow Congolese rebels to participate.

Allies pledge continued support

Zimbabwe's Defence Minister, Moven Mahachi said on Wednesday that Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola would continue supporting Kabila until peace was restored, news agencies reported. Earlier this week, neighbouring Chad pledged "unconditional support" for Kabila and Gabonese President Omar Bongo condemned the "occupation" of DRC by foreign troops, Bongo told media that he planned to convene a summit of central African countries during which he would reveal peace mechanisms for the DRC.

Rebels claim Sudan troops in Kindu

DRC rebels claimed on Tuesday that the Government of Sudan, with Libyan financial backing, has sent 2,000 of its soldiers to Kindu in Maniema province - Kabila's forward military headquarters in the east. The 'East African' newspaper also reported rebel claims that 2,800 Rwandan and Ugandan Hutu rebels were being trained at three camps in southern Sudan. These claims have been denied by the DRC and Khartoum. The rebels also allege that Burundian Hutu rebels are supporting Kabila's forces, claiming that a number of fighters from the Forces pour la defense de la democratie (FDD) had been captured in South Kivu.

Meanwhile, Uganda's 'New Vision' reported on Wednesday that the Sudanese rebel group, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), had moved troops to the Sudan-DRC border to stop the Sudanese government from establishing a base within the DRC. An SPLA spokesman declined to comment on the claim.

Goma calm after attack

Goma was reported to be calm this week after rebel forces repulsed an attack on Monday by hundreds of fighters, comprising Mayi-Mayi warriors, Hutu Interahamwe militia and ex-FAR, news and humanitarian sources reported. Rebel military commander. Jean-Pierre Ondekane said that the fighters attacked Goma's radio station and airport but that their main target was Gisenyi across the border in Rwanda. News sources reported Rwandan Vice-President and Defence Minister, Paul Kagame as accusing the DRC government of training and equipping the fighters. Kagame said Rwanda would not "sit by and watch while Congo destablised us".

Kalemie remains in rebel hands, humanitarian concerns increase

In response to earlier government claims that Kalemie on Lake Tanganyika was about to be recaptured, rebels flew journalists to the town on Wednesday. There was no visible sign of fighting and media reported that the town was firmly in the rebel hands. However, humanitarian sources say that most of the civilian population had fled the town since the beginning of hostilities and that food has become scarce. UN sources said some 400 Congolese refugees arrived in Kigoma, Tanzania on Monday, most from the Kalemie area. The influx has brought the total of new Congolese arrivals in Kigoma to 5,333. Aid agencies in DRC also say that cholera is becoming a serious problem in South Kivu with a sharp rise in mortality rates. Efforts to combat the epidemic are hampered by a shortage of cholera drugs and restricted access to affected areas.

DRC minister says Rwandan troops killed thousands

A DRC state minister claimed in an interview with the French newspaper 'Liberation' Rwandan troops backing the ADFL killed thousands of Hutu refugees in eastern DRC and Mbandaka between October 1996 and June 1997. State Minister Victor Mpoyo said that Rwandan troops did not allow ADFL soldiers to enter the zones where the massacres were taking place, so they were at first "unaware" of the killings. He added that UN human rights investigation teams were not allowed to carry out their work properly because the then DRC Rwandan army chief of staff refused to allow them access to the massacre sites.

Kabila says elections will go ahead

Kabila announced on Wednesday that general elections in the DRC would be held as planned in April 1999 if Ugandan and Rwandan troops leave the country. At a rally in Kinshasa, Kabila announced that an additional 25,000 "young people" would be enrolled in the DRC army and that weapons would be distributed to popular defence forces to be established in Kinshasa.

UGANDA: Government denies involvement in rebellion

President Yoweri Museveni reconfirmed the presence of Ugandan troops in DRC this week but said they were not involved in the rebellion. "We are just watching" to preserve Ugandan security, he is reported to have told parliamentarians. Museveni, quoted by AP, criticised foreign involvement in the DRC, calling it "ideologically repugnant".

SUDAN: Fierce battles in Equatoria

The Sudanese army said on Wednesday that 50 rebels and Ugandan army troops had been killed in fierce battles in Equatoria. Up to 150 shells are reported to have fallen in the Torit area - one of the handful of government-held towns in eastern Equatoria - on Monday. Uganda has denied their involvement in the battles. Rebel radio also claimed this week that a battalion of pro-government troops mutinied and joined the SPLA in the Blue Nile area. The Norwegian People's Aid, meanwhile, said that a hospital it supported in Yei, southern Sudan was bombed on Sunday.

Humanitarian concerns increase

WFP is concerned at the humanitarian situation of people in Western Upper Nile. Fighting between different pro-Khartoum southern factions in the Bentiu area has virtually cut off the area from humanitarian access. A security and needs assessment was called off last week due to insecurity and flooding and only a third of a planned 1,200 mt of food deliveries for August was completed.

A report published by a Catholic News service based in Nairobi this week also said that the limited humanitarian efforts in the Nuba mountains of central Sudan were an exercise in futility. The report said that aid efforts were hampered by cost, lack of transport and access.

Floods devastate Northern State

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said on Tuesday that a 1,000 kilometre stretch along the Nile in Northern State is flooded. The Federation is concerned about the spread of malaria and is delivering insecticide and sprayers to the affected area. Early estimates say that altogether 100,000 people are affected by flooding in northern Sudan.

RWANDA: Displaced camps a "disaster"

Aid officials told IRIN that the official figures for displaced people in Ruhengeri have risen to 185,000. Other increases are reported elsewhere. The director of CONCERN in Rwanda said that the displaced people were generally sheltering in commune buildings, guarded by the army. The situation of the displaced people is "a disaster waiting to happen" she said. Three sites, Kinigi, Gatonde and Cyeru each hold more than 25,000 people, while 14-15 smaller sites account for the rest. Many of the sites lack social services, shelter and clean water. As the rainy season approaches, the outlook is "fairly bleak" and needs for plastic sheeting and other supplies are becoming urgent. UN food aid deliveries to Ruhengeri have been suspended after a convoy hit a landmine killing one passenger.

Three soldiers face death sentence

A Rwandan army officer and his two bodyguards have been sentenced to death for the murder of two women. The two sisters were killed on August 23 when they tried to reclaim a house occupied by the soldiers which belonged to their brother.

BURUNDI: Thousands arrive from DRC

Over 5,500 people have arrived in Burundi's northwestern Cibitoke region, fleeing fighting in the DRC, OCHA Burundi reports. UNHCR figures indicate that 5,586 people had arrived by 11 September, of whom 1,729 were Burundians returning home. Most of the new arrivals were staying in temporary sites, while UNHCR provides return packages to the Burundians, OCHA reports.

KENYA: NGOs told to stop activities

Sixteen Muslim NGOs have been asked by the Kenyan government to stop activities and some expatriate officials have been told to leave the country within seven days. Muslim MPs have asked the government to reconsider the deregistration and the Kenyan Supreme Council of Muslims has called a meeting of imams and other Muslim leaders to plan further action. The NGOs came under suspicion after the bomb blasts at the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam which killed over 250 people and wounded several thousand others.

[ENDS]

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DRC:IRIN chronology of current crisis 30 Sep 1998

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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: IRIN chronology (as of 30 September 1998)

NAIROBI, 30 Sep (IRIN) - Following is a chronology of key events in the Democratic Republic of Congo since the start of the current crisis:

27 July: President Laurent-Desire Kabila orders all foreign soldiers, including Rwandans and Ugandans, to leave the country.

2 Aug: Army rebellion against Kabila begins in eastern DRC with fighting reported in Goma and Bukavu (North and South Kivu) between loyal government troops and a rebel coalition said to comprise Congolese troops, in particular ethnic Tutsi (Banyamulenge) soldiers, backed by Rwandan forces.

Fighting also breaks out at two military camps in Kinshasa when government troops seek to disarm rebel Banyamulenge soldiers and Rwandans.

3 Aug: Rebels gain control of Goma and Bukavu while fighting spreads to other areas of eastern DRC.

Government troops succeed in controlling the rebellion in Kinshasa. A three-day dusk-to-dawn curfew is imposed in the capital. River traffic between Kinshasa and Congo-Brazzaville is suspended.

4 Aug: Rwanda denies any involvement in the DRC rebellion.

Rebels hijack an aircraft at Goma airport and force the pilot to fly across the country to Kitona in Bas-Congo province. The aircraft is reported to have dropped off hundreds of rebel soldiers to open up a western front.

5 Aug: DRC Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha announces in Goma that he has joined the rebel side.

6 Aug: Uvira in South Kivu falls to the rebels. Kabila accuses Rwanda of invading the country. Human rights groups report on persecution of ethnic Tutsis by government soldiers in Kinshasa.

7 Aug: Rebels gain control of Muanda and the Banana naval base in Bas-Congo, effectively cutting off Kinshasa's main supply lines from the nearby Matadi port.

8 Aug: Leaders of DRC, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, Namibia and Tanzania meet in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, to discuss the crisis.

9 Aug: Beni in North Kivu falls to the rebels. Kabila publicly accuses Ugandan troops of fighting in the DRC on the side of the rebels.

12 Aug: Rebels take Bunia.

13 Aug: Rebels take the Inga hydro-electric dam in Bas-Congo, gaining control of Kinshasa's electricity supply.

17 Aug: The rebels announce that their movement will be known as the Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD). Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, an exiled university professor, is appointed chairman, with Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma, an opposition politician, as his deputy. The rebels announce the capture of Matadi in the west, and of Walikale, Baraka, Lubutu and Fizi in the east.

18 Aug: In a statement issued in Addis Ababa, the OAU calls on the rebels to lay down their arms and condemns "any external aggression" in DRC's affairs.

19 Aug: The defence ministers of Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola, meeting in Harare, decide to send troops and military equipment to the DRC in response to Kabila's request for assistance from the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

21 Aug: Zimbabwean and Angolan troops arrive in Kinshasa and Bas-Congo to prop up Kabila's army in the face of the rebel advance on the capital.

21-22 Aug: In separate statements, Rwanda and Uganda warn that they could intervene in the DRC conflict to protect national interests (in the case of Uganda) and the interests of ethnic Tutsis (in the case of Rwanda). Rwanda maintains it has no troops in the DRC, while Uganda says its presence is limited to two army battalions sent prior to the start of the rebellion in order to combat Ugandan rebels based there.

23 Aug: South African President Nelson Mandela chairs a meeting in Pretoria with representatives of SADC member countries, including DRC. The summit, also attended by the presidents of non-SADC countries Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya, mandates Mandela to organise a ceasefire in consultation with OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim.

The Vatican says that 207 people were killed by Banyamulenge rebels at a Roman Catholic mission in Kasika near Uvira.

Government troops and their allies recapture Kitona in Bas-Congo, as the rebels capture Kisangani in Province Orientale and are reportedly 30 km from Kinshasa.

24 Aug: Government troops and their allies recapture the western towns of Muanda and Banana.

26-27 Aug: Fighting erupts near Kinshasa's international airport and adjacent neighbourhoods. Tens of thousands of residents are displaced from their homes. A night-time curfew is reimposed. Rebels take the town of Kalemie on lake Tanganyika in Katanga province.

28 Aug: Loyalist troops backed by Angolan and Zimbabwean forces repulse the rebels' offensive on Kinshasa. News agencies report scenes of Kinshasa residents burning alive suspected or actual Tutsi rebels or their sympathisers in the city.

30 Aug: Government troops and their allies recapture Matadi and the Inga hydro-electric dam in western DRC.

31 Aug: The president of the UN Security Council, in the second statement on the conflict, calls for a ceasefire, the withdrawal of foreign troops and a political dialogue to resolve the crisis.

2 Sep: Kabila attends a summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in Durban, South Africa, where he delivers a speech accusing Rwandan and Ugandan soldiers of committing the 1996-97 massacres of Hutu refugees in the DRC.

3 Sep: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the OAU secretary-general organise meetings in Durban with SADC members, and separately with Rwandan and Ugandan delegations, to try to advance the DRC peace process.

7-8 Sep: DRC peace talks held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, are attended by the heads of state of the DRC, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Uganda, Rwanda and Zambia, as well as the OAU secretary-general. Rebel representatives Ngoma and Karaha are also present, but they are kept apart from the other delegations. A ceasefire agreement worked out by the heads of state is rejected by the rebel delegation who demand face-to-face negotiations with Kabila.

10 Sep: Rebels in Kisangani say they have discovered mass graves containing the corpses of hundreds of Tutsis allegedly killed by government forces in August before the city fell to the rebels. Meanwhile, reports of additional killings of civilians by rebel soldiers or Rwandan troops emerge from south Kivu.

The restoration of electricity and running water to most parts of Kinshasa, the resumption of international flights and the easing of the curfew start-time to midnight signal the gradual return to normality in the capital, but food security remains poor for much of the population.

11 Sep: Shabunda in South Kivu is reported captured by the rebels. Kabila visits Chad, where President Idriss Deby pledges his "unconditional support."

Aid agencies start airlifting food, water-treatment chemicals and other emergency supplies to Kinshasa. The Matadi port and the Matadi-Kinshasa road reopen.

12 Sep: OAU-organised talks, which began in Addis on 10 September, result in an agreement on "draft modalities" for implementing a ceasefire. The talks are attended by DRC, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia as well as the OAU secretary-general and several UN political and military advisors. Rebels say they will not recognise any agreement reached without their direct participation.

Kabila visits Gabon, where President Omar Bongo condemns the "occupation" of the DRC by foreign troops backing the rebels.

14 Sep: Hundreds of Mayi-Mayi warriors and Rwandan Hutu Interahamwe militia attack rebel-held Goma, but are defeated after a five-hour battle. Rwanda accuses Kabila of training and equipping the Hutu attackers.

15 Sep: The annual summit of 14 SADC countries ends in Mauritius with a communique recognising the legitimacy of the intervention of Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia in support of Kabila. The summit mandates Zambian President Frederick Chiluba to continue SADC peace efforts.

The rebels claim that 2,000 Sudanese soldiers were sent to the government's forward military headquarters at Kindu, with Libyan financial backing, to support Kabila. The claim is denied by the Sudanese and DRC governments.

18 Sep: Kabila flies to Tripoli and holds talks with Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi.

19-20 Sep: Zambia's Chiluba and Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa visit the leaders of Uganda and Rwanda to discuss the crisis, as part of SADC mediation efforts.

22 Sep: Rebels claim they gained control of Isiro in Province Orientale.

24 Sep: Thousands of civilians, mainly Banyamulenge, are reportedly displaced in Katanga province because of government attacks on villages.

Chad, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Angola, Namibia and Gabon condemn "aggression against DRC" at a pro-Kabila summit organised by Gabonese President Omar Bongo in the capital, Libreville.

28 Sep: Chad announces it sent 1,000 troops to the DRC to support Kabila.

Nairobi, 30 September 1998 12:00 GMT

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IRIN Update No. 515 Central and Eastern Africa (Friday 2 October 1998)

RWANDA: Akayesu given life

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) today (Friday) sentenced former Rwandan mayor Jean-Paul Akayesu to three life terms for genocide and crimes against humanity, plus 80 years for other violations, including rape. The conviction of Akayesu, 45, on nine counts on 2 September by the tribunal was the first-ever judgement handed down by an international court for the crime of genocide and the first time that rape had been included in international law as a constituent of genocide. Akayesu, who was not accused of personally taking part in any murders or rapes, was mayor of the central commune of Taba during the 1994 genocide.

Pope admits clergy role in genocide

Pope John Paul has told Rwandan bishops making their five-yearly 'ad limina' visit to Rome that they must try harder to reach reconciliation and should "take care of all the people, with no exceptions", according to a report from the Jesuit Refugee Service. "The ties that bind people to Christ are not always as strong as those that bind human communities," the Pope was quoted as saying. The bishops' visit was their first to Rome since the genocide of 1994. Meanwhile, the London-based Catholic newspaper 'The Tablet' reported that the Pope urged the bishops to recognise that church members including clergy had "committed infidelities to the Gospel which require an examination of conscience". Kigali's Archbishop Thaddee Nithinyurwa told the Pope that the peace and concord the Pontiff had prayed for during his pastoral visit to Rwanda in 1990 had been "badly compromised by the forces of evil". The archbishop noted that Rwanda was now burdened with a disproportionate number of widows, orphans and refugees. He said there was "a sort of malaise in relations between the Catholic Church and some public opinion in the country".

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Libya wants "inter-African force"

Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi has proposed sending an "inter-African military force to the DRC to replace Rwandan and Ugandan troops backing rebels seeking to topple President Laurent-Desire Kabila, news agencies reported. RFI said Gaddafi discussed his idea on Wednesday with the presidents of Chad, Eritrea and Niger in the Libyan capital Tripoli. He also sought Nigerian support for his intervention plan during discussions held on 7 September, RFI said. During Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's visit to Tripoli on Tuesday, Gaddafi urged him to withdraw his troops from the DRC, RFI added. Rwanda denies having any soldiers in the DRC while Uganda says its DRC-based soldiers are not involved in the fighting. Libya is suspected of financing the deployment of Chadian and other foreign soldiers supporting Kabila against the rebels.

Meanwhile, Museveni and Kabila were among 11 African heads of states who received medals of honour from Gaddafi on Wednesday for having violated a UN embargo on air travel to Libya over the past three months, news organisations reported. The other medal recipients were the leaders of Niger, Chad, Eritrea, Sudan, Mali, Gambia, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso and Central African Republic.

Kabila labelled as "criminal"

The Ugandan State Minister for Finance Sam Kutesa told Uganda's 'New Vision' newspaper yesterday (Thursday) that Kabila was an international criminal for instigating genocide against ethnic Tutsis in the DRC. Kutesa cited hate propaganda, broadcast on state media since the start of the rebellion, that have urged Congolese to hunt down and kill Tutsis. The human rights group Article 19 last month called on the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda to investigate Kabila for his reported incitement to genocide.

Meanwhile, a Rwandan minister told the International Press Service that Kabila had allied himself with "a cocktail of criminals" including Mayi-Mayi warriors, Rwandan Hutu Interahamwe militia, Burundian Hutu rebels, Ugandan rebels and Sudanese troops.

The Jesuit Refugee Service says the number of refugees arriving in the Kigoma border region is lower than expected because anti-Kabila rebels are attempting to prevent those suffering from the conflict in Congo from leaving the country. Between 100-200 per day are arriving in Tanzania. They are being sent to Nhyragusu camp, and to Lugufu camp, which is being re-opened. A JRS newsletter, sent to IRIN, also quoted a human rights organisation based in the country as saying at least 2,000 people were killed in the first six weeks of the renewed conflict and children as young as 11 were taking part in the fighting.

No government word on Punia

DRC's government spokesman, Minister of Information Didier Mumengi, told Reuters yesterday that he could not confirm a rebel claim to have captured the town of Punia. On Wednesday, an aide to rebel military commander Jean-Pierre Ondekane said the town of Punia, which is about 200 km north of Kindu and has a population of about 10,000 people, had fallen.

SUDAN: Aid flights resume in south

Aid flights resumed to southern Sudan today after the Khartoum government had refused clearance yesterday because of an "administrative glitch", an OLS official told IRIN. "All planes are flying today," Elizabeth Kramer said. Permission for flights on Thursday was denied due to a "misunderstanding" over clearance procedures, she added.

Mubarak criticised for pro-US stance

Sudan's ruling National Congress has criticised Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak for suggesting a pharmaceutical plant destroyed in a US missile strike could have produced agents for chemical weapons, AFP reported. Mubarak's statement was due to "American pressure on him," and could "adversely affect" Sudanese-Egyptian relations, the National Congress Secretary-General Ali Al-Hajj Mohammed told a local newspaper after a meeting yesterday of the decision-making body.

Charges added to bomb suspect

US federal prosecutors have added two charges against a Sudan-born associate of Osama Bin Laden, the Saudi Arabian millionaire accused of masterminding the bombings of US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. Mahmud Salim, arrested in Germany two week ago, was charged in an amended federal complaint with taking part in a conspiracy to attack US military sites abroad and a conspiracy to transport explosives, AFP reported from New York. He had earlier been charged with conspiracy to murder and use of a weapon of mass destruction.

UGANDA: Four rescued from downed plane

Rescue teams have found alive four passengers of a small plane that crashed in the Ruwenzori mountains of western Uganda, the 'New Vision' reported today. Among the survivors was Lieutenant Colonel Jet Mwebaze, a brother of Chief of Staff Brigadier James Kazini. The 'Monitor' newspaper said the pilot had died in the crash.

Nairobi, 2 October 1998 14:30 GMT

[ENDS]

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IRIN Update 516 for 5 Oct 1998

U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 516 Central and Eastern Africa (Monday 5 October 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Rebels attack Kindu

Rebels of the Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD) claimed today (Monday) to have captured Kindu's airport and to be fighting government soldiers for control of the city itself, news agencies reported. A government spokesman acknowledged today that the rebels had launched an attack on Kindu, but said the attack had been repulsed, AFP reported. There was no independent information available on the situation in Kindu.

The fall of Kindu, the government's forward military headquarters located in the eastern Maniema province, would be an important blow to Kabila, analysts said. "The government has been telling everyone that a major counter-offensive would be launched from Kindu. If Kindu then crumbles like a house of cards, it would be a disaster for the government militarily and dramatic in psychological terms for the population," one Kinshasa-based analyst told IRIN today.

Earlier, the RCD said they had captured the towns of Kalima (about 80 km northeast of Kindu), Ubundu (120 km southeast of Kisangani) and Bumba (about 400 km northwest of Kisangani) as well as the town of Buta in Province Orientale over the weekend.

Museveni "welcomes" Libyan plan

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said he "welcomed" the proposal made by Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi last week to replace Ugandan troops in the DRC with a joint African intervention force, the Libyan news agency JANA reported. Gaddafi announced the proposal following his discussions last week with the presidents of Chad, Niger and Eritrea. Meanwhile, Radio France Internationale today quoted a DRC government spokesman as saying that Kinshasa was "favourable" towards Gaddafi's plan.

UGANDA/SUDAN: Kampala condemns bombing of northern town

Kampala yesterday (Sunday) condemned the alleged bombing by a Sudanese aircraft of a trading centre in northern Uganda. A defence ministry statement said a Sudanese Antonov aircraft dropped six bombs on the village in Adjumani district on Saturday, injuring four women and two children. A WFP offical told Reuters that two bombs fell near the agency's compound. Kampala accused Khartoum of bombing the town of Bukaka, near the border with the DRC, on 25 September.

Khartoum complains to UN Security Council

Sudan has lodged an official complaint with the UN Security Council accusing Uganda and Eritrea of sending troops to support southern rebels, AFP quoted the official news agency SUNA as reporting. Khartoum has asked the council to meet "its responsibilities with regard to this aggression," a senior foreign ministry official told SUNA.

Uganda moves army HQ to border

Kampala has denied its troops are backing the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). However, Uganda has moved the headquarters of its northern command to the Sudan border. The move by the army's Fourth Division was reportedly an attempt to seal the frontier. The relocation occurred three weeks ago, according to the official 'New Vision' newspaper.

Nine civilians killed in rebel attack

Nine civilians were killed and 10 injured when rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) attacked a village in western Uganda last week, press reports said. The 'New Vision' on Friday said government troops retaliated following the attack in Kaberere. An ADF spokesman, quoted by the independent 'Monitor' newspaper, claimed 31 government soldiers were killed in the clashes.

RWANDA: Six killed in rebel attack

Military officials in the northwest town of Gisenyi say six people were killed when armed rebels launched an attack in Kanama, the Rwanda News Agency reported. Six more people were wounded in Friday's attack, carried out by some 30 militiamen wearing military uniforms. The army intervened and carried out search operations for the rebels, who scattered in different directions. Military officials said the Interahamwe, who had been cut off from their rear bases in DRC, were responsible for the attack.

WFP distributing urgent food supplies

WFP last week distributed urgently-needed food supplies to thousands of Rwandans pouring back into Kanama commune. In a news release issued on Friday, WFP said it began the distribution of 120 mt of food, under military escort, on Tuesday. Nearly all the commune's 80,000 inhabitants were forced to flee into villages and the nearby Gishwati forest a year ago following rebel attacks. They are now streaming back after hearing the security situation had stabilised, although continuing sporadic attacks mean that many of the returnees prefer to group together near administrative buildings. WFP says this means that thousands of people are still displaced from their homes and unable to cultivate their land.

New Rwandan exiles' organisation

Exiled former Rwandan officials have set up an organisation called the African Democratic Congress, according to the BBC Kinyarwanda service. Its members include a former defence minister of the previous regime James Gasana, former prime minister Dismas Nsengiyaremye and former information minister Jean-Baptiste Nkuriyingoma who is also the organisation's spokesman. He told the BBC the group's members are opposed to tribalism. They want talks with the Rwandan government in a bid to restore peace, he said.

BURUNDI: Four killed in southern Bujumbura

Armed bandits killed four people in Musuga, a southern district of Bujumbura, last night, AFP reported. Citing local administrative sources, the news agency said an armed gang entered the home of a local chief before heading to another nearby house where they killed four family members and stole their belongings.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: Violence impacts humanitarian operations

A UNICEF-supported national nutrition survey underway in Congo-Brazzaville has been suspended due to increasing security concerns in the country. UNICEF representative Eric Laroche told IRIN that six government employees who were working on the nutrition survey in the Pool region have been missing since attacks in the area on 26 September. News organisations reported that at least 10 people were killed in the attacks on Goma Tse-Tse and Kibossi, located 20-30 km south of Brazzaville. The identities of the victims were still being determined. The missing survey workers include doctors, epidemiologists, researchers and traditional birth attendants. "There are signs that the nutritional status of children is deteriorating in the country, but our ability to help is being hindered by insecurity," Laroche said.

News agencies reported that 10 people have been arrested in connection with the Pool attacks. Exiled former prime minister Bernard Kolelas told RFI that the attacks were carried out by his Ninja militia in retaliation for what he said were recent summary executions committed by security forces in nearby Mindouli. Rail traffic between Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire has been suspended as a result of the violence. Congo-Brazzaville will mark the first anniversary of the end of the 1997 civil war next week.

Nairobi, 5 October 1998, 14:30 gmt

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IRIN Update 518 for 7 Oct 1998

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IRIN Update No. 518 Central and Eastern Africa (Wednesday 7 October 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Serious cholera epidemic in South Kivu

The cholera epidemic in South Kivu is worsening, with a serious lack of drugs and functioning treatment facilities reported, humanitarian sources said today (Wednesday). Particularly hard hit is the Shabunda area. Information collected from treatment centres in six of Shabunda's 26 sub-districts indicates that there are over 80 new cholera cases and 30 cholera-related deaths reported every day in those centres alone. After Shabunda was bombed, much of the civilian population fled into the forest, where there is a total lack of proper hygiene and drinking water, the sources said. Major cholera outbreaks and high mortality rates are also reported in Mwenga, Walungu and other areas of the province.

Banyamulenge organisation distances itself from rebellion

A Banyamulenge organisation, the Forces Republicaines et Federalistes (FRF), has distanced itself from the rebel Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD), stressing that the RCD is not a Banyamulenge movement. The president of the FRF, Joseph Mutambo, told IRIN today that while it supported the bid to oust President Laurent-Desire Kabila, the FRF was concerned with the survival of the Banyamulenge people and it did not believe the current war would bring about durable peace. He expressed concern that the Banyamulenge were not only being massacred by Kabila's regime, but also by anti-Banyamulenge militias still operating in areas under RCD control in Katanga province and parts of south Kivu. He said the RCD was unable to stop the activities of these armed militias.

Mutambo issued an urgent plea for the international community to assist Banyamulenge fleeing from areas such as Fizi, Moba and Vyura. He expressed concern over the possible outbreak of epidemics with the onset of the rainy season, saying people were arriving daily in Kalemie awaiting boats to transport them to Uvira. As of today, 11,000-12,000 people were blocked in Kalemie, he said. About 1,350 Banyamulenge had arrived in Uvira. "Practically the entire Banyamulenge population of Katanga has fled," he added.

Victims of Goma attack detailed

Additional details have emerged about civilian casualties from the 14 September attack on Goma by Mayi-Mayi warriors and Rwandan Hutu Interahamwe militia. Humanitarian sources told IRIN that among the civilians killed in the attack were 13 women and children who were family members of ethnic Tutsi men killed in Kisangani in the days before it fell to the rebels on 23 August. The 13 women and children, who were staying together in a Goma centre, were deliberately targeted in last month's attack, the sources said. More than 100 family members of slain Tutsi men in Kisangani were evacuated to Goma by the rebels in early September.

Anti-RCD rebel "coalition" backing Kabila

Along with widening regional involvement in the DRC crisis, an assortment of anti-RCD rebel groups are active in the conflict, regional analysts say. They point to the "marriage of convenience" between rebel forces disadvantaged by the political realignments in the Great Lakes spearheaded by Rwanda and Uganda. They have apparently thrown their support behind Kabila, and in the process have won greater standing and support from Kinshasa. Pointing to the ex-FAR in particular, a commentator noted that the "nature of the beast has been transformed." He told IRIN that whereas the ex-FAR "used to hang out with groups like the ex-FAZ, they are now in the big league and welcomed by Kinshasa and Khartoum."

He said large numbers of former Rwandan government soldiers and Interahamwe militia, sheltering in Congo-Brazzaville and the Central African Republic, are rallying to Kinshasa's side. "Normally refugees flee conflicts," the analyst noted.

Other - at least ideologically - pro-Kabila rebel groups are believed to be Uganda's Allied Democratic Forces, the Lord's Resistance Army and the revived West Nile Bank Front. Burundi's rebel Forces pour la defense de la democratie, the anti-Banyamulenge Mayi-Mayi in DRC, and to some extent the ex-FAZ, are also opposed to the anti-Kabila alliance, the analyst said. He however pointed out it was difficult to assess how coordinated the rebel activity is.

Third day of fighting in Kindu

The rebels and the government today both claimed to have the upper hand in a third day of heavy fighting for control of Kindu in Maniema province, news organisations reported. Rebel-controlled radio in Bukavu, monitored by the BBC, said rebel soldiers already controlled some areas of Kindu and were advancing towards the airport. The DRC minister of defence, however, said rebel soldiers were retreating in the face of a government counter-offensive towards Kalima, 80 km to the east, AFP reported. Casualties were reported by both sides, and the civilian population was on the move, reports said.

Meanwhile, Rwandan radio reported today that troops fighting on the side of the government in Kindu include soldiers from Sudan, but none from Zimbabwe, Angola or Namibia.

SPLA soldiers reported in Dungu

Informed sources in contact with the Dungu area of Province Orientale told IRIN that tension between the Sudanese and local communities has increased following the reported arrival of Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) troops at the end of September. Since their arrival, the SPLA soldiers were reported to have looted dispensaries, vehicles and food supplies in the area. There are some 30,000 Sudanese refugees in Dungu, located about 100 km from the DRC-Congo border, and thousands of other Sudanese nationals living within the town itself. Meanwhile, a WFP officer is travelling today to Yambio in southern Sudan to verify reports of an influx of Sudanese returnees from the Dungu area.

Museveni, Kagame discuss DRC situation

Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame held talks with President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda on Monday to discuss the DRC situation, Rwandan radio reported today. A joint communique issued after the meeting at Museveni's home village of Rwakitura stressed both countries' support for a negotiated solution to the conflict which took into account the interests of neighbouring countries. Both leaders reiterated their concern over armed insurgents using DRC as a springboard for attacks on Rwanda and Uganda. They also condemned the "involvement of Sudan" in the conflict and

"questioned the wisdom of any continued support for the Kabila-Sudan alliance," the radio reported.

Kabila meanwhile arrived in Nigeria yesterday (Tuesday) for talks with head of state General Abdulsalam Abubakar on the DRC crisis, news organisations reported.

BURUNDI: Rebels, government involved in DRC war

An international researcher says both Burundian government and rebel forces are involved in the DRC war. In mid-August, rebel forces were observed in Kigoma, western Tanzania, preparing to travel to Kalemie to hook up with pro-Kabila forces. Rebels interviewed by the researcher said they had been promised weapons and assistance from the Kabila troops. International aid workers were quoted as saying there had been some movement out of the Kigoma refugee camps. On the Burundi government side, the attitude and extent of involvement changed following Kabila's anti-Tutsi declarations, the analyst told IRIN. After the withdrawal of Burundi embassy staff from Kinshasa, the authorities in Bujumbura reportedly deployed reinforcements across the border in South Kivu and near Kalemie in order, they said, to protect national security interests.

Violence reported in Kayanza, Gitega

Rebel attacks were reported in various communes of Kayanza province over the past week, WFP's latest weekly emergency report said. Some population displacement was reported as a result of the violence and National Route 1 was temporarily closed. The WFP report said the insecurity would delay the planned distribution of seed-protection rations in the area. Meanwhile, humanitarian sources reported that a clinic was attacked by rebels in Gitega province over the weekend.

UGANDA/SUDAN: Khartoum claims it repulsed Ugandan advance

Ugandan troops suffered "huge losses" in men and equipment in clashes with the Sudanese army this week in Eastern Equatoria, Khartoum's army spokesman has claimed. Lieutenant General Abdel Rahman Sir al-Khati told the private 'Al-Rai Al-Aam' daily that a Ugandan attack on Mongalla, 50 km northeast of Juba, was repulsed after fierce fighting.

Ugandan Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Amama Mbabazi has described Khartoum's allegations of Kampala's involvement in fighting in southern Sudan as "propaganda". He told AFP it was designed to cover their embarrassment over SPLA successes.

Uganda dismisses Khartoum's threat

Mbabazi also dismissed a warning by Sudanese President Umar al-Bashir on Monday that Khartoum may attack Uganda in retaliation for Kampala's alleged support for the SPLA's offensive. "In my view that is an empty threat, and he has no capacity to do it."

Heavy fighting continues

Meanwhile, heavy clashes were reported around Torit and Bor towns in southern Sudan between the SPLA and government forces, 'al-Rai al-Aam' reported. DPA quoted another Khartoum daily, 'Alwan', as claiming today that the army killed 50 SPLA soldiers when it beat off an offensive in the Mundi district of the Nuba mountains.

Nairobi, 7 October 1998, 15:25 gmt

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IRIN Update No. 521 Central and Eastern Africa (Monday 12 October 1998)

BURUNDI: Arusha peace talks deferred to Tuesday

The third round of Arusha peace talks, due to resume today (Monday), has been put back until tomorrow, the independent Hirondelle news agency reported. Delegates said the aim was to hold initial consultations before the talks began. Tomorrow's plenary session is expected to adopt an agenda for the negotiations which will include a debate on the problems of democracy and good governance in Burundi. Hirondelle said the talks were expected to last between two and three weeks. The Agence burundaise de presse yesterday (Sunday) quoted Information Minister Luc Rukingama who confirmed the government's participation in the talks.

The minister also denied reports of Burundi's involvement in the crisis in Democratic Republic of Congo. Burundi's role was to "ensure that security along the common border is not jeopardised," he said.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: UN mission to east detailed

The UN assessment mission to rebel-held areas of eastern DRC on 7-8 October estimated that there were between 8,000 and 10,000 displaced Banyamulenge in Kalemie and Uvira or on the way to those two locations, the mission leader, OCHA's Kevin Kennedy, told IRIN today. The displaced said they had fled the Vyura area of Katanga Province in August following attacks on their villages. About 250 had been killed in Vyura or on the way towards Kalemie, the mission was informed. The rebel Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD) said they wished to relocate the displaced to an area some 35 km north of Uvira, for resettlement.

The UN team found that while there was currently no severe humanitarian crisis, the longer-term well-being of the displaced and other vulnerable groups in the area could be in jeopardy. The population has limited access to adequate food supplies and health care facilities, and the water and sanitation situation in the displaced persons' camps was reported to be poor. Based on the findings of the mission and on-going discussions with all concerned parties, the UN is currently examining what kind of assistance could be provided to assist the displaced and other vulnerable groups in the area. Other issues raised with rebel representatives by the UN team during the mission included human rights concerns and the return of looted humanitarian property, Kennedy said.

Meanwhile, DRC Justice Minister Mwenze Kongolo on Saturday accused Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi of moving thousands of Banyamulenge and other ethnic Tutsis to Uvira to create a "Tutsiland." Kongolo was speaking at a press conference in Kinshasa, broadcast on Congolese state television, monitored by the BBC.

Rebel soldiers poaching in Garamba park

Informed sources in the region told IRIN that rebel soldiers, allegedly including Ugandans, Rwandans and the SPLA, are moving into the Garamba national park on the border with Sudan, with the aim of poaching rhino horn and ivory. According to the sources, the last northern white rhinos left in the wild are at threat, having survived the 1996 rebellion with very little loss due to efforts by the national wildlife service, the Institut congolais pour la conservation de la nature. The rebel soldiers are said to be coercing the local population not to inform their superiors. Wildlife authorities have appealed to all sides in the conflict to respect the irreplaceable heritage of the national parks and reserves.

Looting reported in Dungu

Meanwhile reliable sources in contact with Dungu told IRIN there were clashes between Mayi-Mayi fighters and rebel soldiers advancing on the town late last month. A vast part of the population had already fled the town after the retreat of Congolese government soldiers and looting by the Mayi-Mayi. On 27 September, SPLA fighters arrived in Dungu, saying they had not come to help President Laurent-Desire Kabila nor the rebels but to "chase the (Sudanese) refugees back into Sudan and recruit the young men". According to the sources, the SPLA began looting and stealing which has increased tension between the Congolese and the Sudanese in the area.

Aircraft shot down over Kindu

A Congo Airlines aircraft with some 40 people on board was shot down by rebels over Kindu airport on Saturday morning, news agencies reported. The rebels told Reuters that the Boeing 727 aircraft was carrying government soldiers and military equipment and that they shot it as it was about to land at Kindu, which is the government's forward military headquarters in eastern DRC. The government, however, said the plane was carrying civilians, including about 20 women and children, and that it was shot about five minutes after taking off from Kindu for Kinshasa, Reuters said. There was no independent confirmation of either claim. Fighting between the rebels and government forces started around Kindu on 5 October.

UGANDA: ADF camps destroyed, army says

The Ugandan army says it has destroyed 18 camps belonging to the rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the Rwenzori mountains and rescued 222 civilians, the state-owned 'Sunday Vision' reported yesterday. It cited Second Division Commander Colonel Nakibus Lakara who said 22 of the civilians were students of Kichwamba technical college who were abducted by the ADF three months ago. He named the major ADF camps, destroyed by the army, as Kamango, Katonga, Kamengo, Kamanyu, Buliira, Kasenga and Kidedeya, adding that a number of rebels were killed while others surrendered.

SUDAN: Flood emergency still critical

Although flooding has receded in northeast Sudan, the flood emergency has now entered a "critical public health phase" as large areas remain under stagnant water, according to the latest OCHA Sudan situation report. There is concern that the emergency situation could worsen in the coming months due to outbreaks of water-borne diseases, lack of shelter and poor food security conditions, the report said. Tens of thousands of people were made homeless by the floods in seven states. The water and sanitation situation is reported to be deteriorating, and increases in malaria, diarrhoea and other diseases have already been reported in some areas. Humanitarian interventions are being undertaken by UN, NGO and government agencies, but these are not addressing all of the flood-related needs, the report added.

SPLA withdraw from Liria

The SPLA confirmed on Friday that its troops had withdrawn from the town of Liria in eastern Equatoria, AFP reported. A communique issued in Nairobi said the SPLA had withdrawn "for tactical reasons" but it gave no further details, AFP said. On Friday, Sudanese state radio in Khartoum said that government forces have regained control of the road between Juba and Torit in eastern Equatoria.

Nairobi, 12 October 1998, 14:30 gmt

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IRIN Update No. 526 Central and Eastern Africa (Monday 19 October 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Rebels offer ceasefire

The rebel Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD) today (Monday) offered a ceasefire to find a peaceful end to the conflict, the Pan-African Movement told IRIN. RCD Chairman Professor Ernest Wamba dia Wamba told the Pan-African Movement in a telephone conversation there was no need to "go on killing and destroying the country". "We are offering a ceasefire so that negotiations for a lasting peace in the DRC and the region as a whole can begin, provided the Kabila government and its allies respond positively," Wamba was quoted as saying.

South Kivu governor sacked

The governor of South Kivu, Charles Magabe, has been sacked by the RCD and his deputy, Benjamin Serukiza, appointed acting governor. According to a decree read over Bukavu radio yesterday (Sunday), Magabe was fired because he made a private visit abroad instead of carrying out an official visit to Uvira. "Such behaviour constitutes an act of serious indiscipline," the decree stated. Any decisions or statements issued by Magabe were henceforth null and void. Regional analysts told IRIN Magabe was opposed to the RCD and had probably "connived" with President Laurent-Desire Kabila to sabotage the rebellion.

Rebels en route to Mbuji-Mayi

Well-informed sources told IRIN today rebel forces were halfway between Samba and Lubao, in Maniema province, progressing towards the Kasai Oriental capital, Mbuji-Mayi. The Belgian daily 'Le Soir' noted last week that the capture of Mbuji-Mayi, the "diamond capital", would deprive Kabila's government of its diamond revenue, necessary for the war effort. 'Le Soir' added however that Zimbabwe and Angola were likely to intervene in the fighting for Kasai.

Meanwhile sources in Kinshasa said that foreign currency is rare as diamond merchants are witholding foreign money in protest against a new government central trading department for precious minerals. On 11 September 1998, a presidential decree announced the creation of the 'Service d'achat de substances minerales precieuses' (SASMIP) in charge of purchasing, in Congolese francs, all gold and diamonds extracted in DRC and selling them for foreign currency. The decree notes the necessity of "strengthening state sovereignty over its natural resources" so that "not one gram of gold or diamond carat circulates outside the official circuit". The Agence congolaise de presse reported on Saturday that diamond exports had decreased by 13 percent in September.

Nairobi summit calls for peace-keeping force

Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi, Tanzanian President Benjamin Mpaka and President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda have called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the DRC and the setting up of a neutral international peace-keeping force under OAU and UN auspices, news agencies said. Meeting in Nairobi on Sunday, the three presidents reaffirmed the need to address the "genuine security concerns" of neighbouring countries and expressed support for the efforts of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to end the DRC crisis, news agencies said.

In a nine-point communique, the leaders also urged security for marginalised groups and an all-inclusive political dialogue in the country. Kabila, who was expected to attend the meeting, did not arrive, news organisations reported. The weekly 'EastAfrican' newspaper said today that the Nairobi summit was meant to find ways of "easing Uganda out of the DRC quagmire." The summit also came a month ahead of a meeting to discuss Rwanda's application to join the East African Cooperation, a regional grouping that currently comprises Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, the newspaper added.

Kabila visits Sudan

Kabila paid a one-day visit to Khartoum on Saturday for talks with President Omar al-Bashir. Sudanese radio said they discussed the "foreign invasion" and efforts to counter it. Bashir expressed Sudan's support for the DRC.

Uganda threatens retaliation if Zimbabwe attacks eastern DRC

Ugandan Foreign Minister Eriya Kategaya yesterday threatened retaliation if Ugandan forces in DRC came under attack by Zimbabwean troops, AFP reported. Kategaya, who was responding to an announcement by President Robert Mugabe that Zimbabwe would send troops to eastern DRC, said Ugandan Regional Cooperation Minister Amama Mbabazi was currently in Harare to discuss the DRC conflict with Zimbabwean officials. According to the Ugandan state-owned 'New Vision' on Friday, Mbabazi had commented that Uganda and Zimbabwe agreed the conflict was an internal DRC problem and that a negotiated solution was necessary.

UGANDA: Three NGO workers killed

Three Sudanese employees of Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) were killed when their convoy was attacked and looted near the Sudanese border in northern Uganda on Thursday, an NPA spokesman told IRIN today. The attack took place some 20 km from Koboko as the NPA convoy was returning from western Equatoria, where it had delivered relief supplies for some 15,000 displaced persons in the Bamurye camp near Kajo-Keji, NPA said. The attackers were believed to be from the rebel West Nile Bank Front (WNBF). The Ugandan army has increased its patrols in the area, the NPA spokesman said, adding that the NGO was continuing to use the road to Sudan. About 112,130 displaced people in Western Equatoria depend on relief supplies delivered via that route, he added.

New LRA faction created

The rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has split into two factions over the issue of the treatment of civilians, the 'New Vision' newspaper reported on Friday. The new faction, known as LRA-Democratic, is led by Ronald Otim Komakech, a long-time war planner for LRA leader Joseph Kony, the newspaper said. Komakech's faction was reported to have set up an office in Juba, southern Sudan, under the protection of another rebel group, the Uganda National Rescue Front Part Two (UNRF-2), it added.

ADF rebels "stranded" in west

Meanwhile, the 'Monitor' newspaper said that rebels of the Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) were "stranded" in the Ruwenzori Mountains in western Uganda. Quoting an army spokesman, the newspaper said military operations against ADF positions since June have largely cut off the rebels' access to food and ammunition supplies in the area.

BURUNDI: Differences emerge at Arusha talks

At the ongoing peace talks in Arusha, Tanzania, the 17 delegations have been discussing ways of ending the civil conflict in Burundi, Umwizero radio in Bujumbura reported. Hashim Mbita, a spokesman for the Nyerere Foundation which is sponsoring the talks, said differences had emerged over the system of people's representation, with rebel and opposition delegations calling for a return to universal suffrage. Rebel delegations have also called for a reorganisation of the army.

RWANDA: 13 killed in lake mishap

At least 13 people were killed when a minibus they were travelling in plunged into Lake Kivu in the western Kibuye prefecture on Thursday, Rwandan radio reported. Five others were rushed to hospital after the accident near Karengera. The vehicle apparently overshot the road and landed in the water.

SUDAN: War-wounded patients on increase

The number of admissions to the ICRC hospital in Lokichokio, northern Kenya, has increased by 40 percent over the past six weeks due to renewed fighting in Eastern Equatoria, according to an ICRC statement received by IRIN today. The statement said that 100 new patients were treated at the Lokichokio hospital in the first two weeks of October alone. Most of these patients had arrived from Equatoria and more than half had gunshot wounds. Meanwhile, an ICRC surgical team at the teaching hospital in government-held Juba has recently treated 20 war victims, the statement added.

EAST AFRICA: Single currency planned

Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda plan on introducing a single currency "soon after the year 2000," Kenyan television said on Thursday, quoting Kenyan Minister for East African and Regional Cooperation Nicholas Biwott. Meanwhile, the three countries have agreed to adopt a "zero tariff" for goods produced and exported within the region, Kenyan television said on Saturday. The measure, announced by Finance Minister Simeon Nyachae, will take effect in the 1999-2000 fiscal year as part of efforts to establish an East African common market, it said.

Leaders condemn terrorism

At Saturday's summit of East African states in Nairobi to discuss the DRC crisis, presidents Moi, Museveni and Mpaka also condemned acts of terrorism and called for concerted efforts to combat and eradicate terrorism in all its forms, Kenyan radio said. Before the meeting, the three leaders laid wreaths at the site of the 7 August bomb blast at the US embassy.

Nairobi, 19 October 1998, 15:10 gmt

[ENDS]

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Editor: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, aadinar@sas.upenn.edu

IRIN Update 531 for 26 Oct 1998

U N I T E D N A T I O N S Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa

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IRIN Update No. 531 Central and Eastern Africa (Monday 26 October 1998)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Lusaka talks begin

Foreign and defence ministers from 12 African countries began talks today (Monday) in the Zambian capital Lusaka aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the DRC crisis, news agencies said. The talks include representatives from Zambia, South Africa, Gabon, Tanzania, Mozambique, Kenya, DRC, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Uganda and Rwanda, AP said. Also present are OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim, a delegation from the rebel Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD) and observers from Libya, news agencies said. UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Ibrahima Fall was also scheduled to attend the talks, a UN spokesman said in New York on Friday.

Salim said the meeting would seek an immediate cessation of hostilities and a timetable for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the DRC, and it would try to address the security concerns of its neighbors, AP said. It was unclear whether the RCD representatives would sit at the same negotiating table as the other delegations.

Military situation remains confused

The Rwanda News Agency said ex-FAR and Interahamwe militia killed nine people and wounded five others during an attack at Byahi near Goma on Saturday morning. Quoting rebel-held radio in Goma, it said the victims were mostly traders. Meanwhile, the government and the RCD both reported various military successes in eastern DRC over the weekend, but none of the claims could be independently confirmed. Informed sources in contact with Mbuji-Mayi, Kasai Oriental, told IRIN today that the town remained calm.

Displaced face health problems - NGO

A local NGO in Uvira told IRIN on Saturday that Banyamulenge staying in displaced persons' camps in the town are facing health problems, including cholera and a shortage of drugs. Four people have died so far and 35 others have been admitted to hospital, it said. There are currently about 8,000 displaced Banyamulenge from Katanga, as well as some people from the Bafulero ethnic group, staying in the Uvira camps, the NGO said, adding that between 3,000 and 4,000 displaced people remain in Kalemie waiting to be transported to Uvira.

Tshisekedi barred from leaving - UDPS

Immigration officials in Kinshasa on Saturday prevented opposition politician Etienne Tshisekedi from leaving the country, the Union pour la democratie et le progres social (UDPS) said in a statement received by IRIN today. Tshisekedi had been invited to Brussels by the European Parliament to present his plan for a peaceful settlement of the DRC crisis, the statement said. The UDPS accused Kabila of being a "dictator" who continued to hold Tshisekedi as his "prisoner," the statement added. Reuters quoted a senior government official as saying on Monday that Tshisekedi was prevented from leaving the DRC because of "passport problems."

Meanwhile, Kabila has received a draft of the country's proposed new constitution prepared by a 13-member institutional reform commission, news agencies said on Friday. The draft is to be put to a national referendum, Reuters reported.

RWANDA: Former education minister transferred to ICTR

Another genocide suspect has been transferred to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), according to a press release from the court. Dr Andre Rwamakuba, who was education minister during the 1994 genocide, was transferred from Namibia to the ICTR in Arusha, Tanzania, on Friday. He was arrested in Windhoek two days earlier. The accused, from Gikomero commune in Kigali-Rural prefecture, is a medical doctor by profession and is charged with genocide crimes and crimes against humanity, the press release said.

Meanwhile, the trial of another suspect, Alfred Musema, is due to start in Arusha in January, the independent Hirondelle news agency reported. Musema, the former director of the Gisovu tea factory in southwest Rwanda, was transferred to the court in May 1997 after his arrest in Switzerland, and has pleaded not guilty to genocide crimes.

Akayesu still on hunger strike

Ex-mayor Jean-Paul Akayesu, who was convicted of genocide earlier this month, is now on his fifth day of hunger strike, Hirondelle reported today. He is protesting against the court's refusal to allow him a lawyer of his choice to handle his appeal. An ICTR spokesman however said that if Akayesu wanted to pay for his own lawyer, "he can hire whoever he pleases".

WFP distributing food in Gikongoro

WFP has begun distributing relief food supplies to over 25,000 Rwandan families facing food shortages in Gikongoro prefecture. According to a WFP news release, received today by IRIN, the UN agency will distribute some 1,200 mt of food over the next three weeks. WFP's representative in Rwanda, Gerard van Dijk, said most of the families only had a one acre plot of land to cultivate, mostly on steep hillsides where the quality of soil had eroded over the years. He added that the food aid would reach over 20 percent of the prefecture's 500,000 residents.

UGANDA: Kidnapped tourists sighted

Three tourists, kidnapped two months ago by Rwandan rebels during a gorilla tracking trip in the Rwenzori mountains, have been spotted in eastern DRC, the state-owned 'New Vision' reported on Friday. It cited a western diplomatic source as saying the three, a New Zealander and two Swedes - had been sighted in the forests, reportedly along with two other foreign captives. The 'Sunday Vision' meanwhile reported yesterday that a New Zealand radio network has offered airtime to the rebels holding the tourists in an attempt to secure their release. The newspaper said Radio Pacific Network was sending a correspondent to the region with an offer of an hour's live broadcast in return for freeing the tourists.

SUDAN: "Technical fault" caused warplane to crash, army says

Sudan has admitted the loss of a plane during military operations in Eastern Equatoria. In a statement read out over Sudanese television yesterday, the armed forces' general command said troops were conducting an operation to "clear out the remaining pocket of mercenaries and outlaws" when the plane "developed a technical fault and crashed". Reuters quoted the rebel SPLA as saying it shot down the aircraft in the Torit/Liria area.

The Sudanese government meanwhile announced on Saturday that all universities would reopen on 31 October. Studies had been suspended to allow students to enrol for the war effort.

Support for Eritrean, Ugandan rebels

According to Reuters, Sudan has acknowledged support for rebels trying to overthrow the governments of Uganda and Eritrea. Foreign Minister Mustafa Osmal Ismail said Sudan's support was in response to those countries' backing of Sudanese rebels. He added that his country had also offered Kabila political support against the DRC rebellion, but had not sent troops to the country.

Over 28,000 displaced in Kassala

In the eastern state of Kassala, some 28,300 displaced people have been registered, following conflict along the Sudan-Eritrea border while in Tokar, mixed commodities have been distributed to about 8,000 people displaced by the same conflict, WFP says. It adds that 17,000 returnees from DRC have been registered in Yambio, and they are arriving at the rate of about 1,000 per day.

ETHIOPIA/ERITREA: OAU mediation to resume next month, Ethiopia says

The Ethiopian foreign ministry has announced that an OAU mediation team will hold talks with the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea next month in a bid to resolve the simmering border conflict, news organisations reported. An OAU committee, comprising the presidents of Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe and Djibouti, were due to meet the two leaders separately after which recommendations would be drawn up, the foreign ministry statement said.

Nairobi, 26 October 1998, 14:55 gmt

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IRIN Update No. 543 for Central and Eastern Africa

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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Joint Rwandan-Ugandan military command formed

Rwanda and Uganda have reportedly formed a joint military command in eastern DRC, according to the semi-official Ugandan 'New Vision' daily today (Wednesday). It said the joint command was headed by Ugandan acting chief-of-staff Brigadier James Kazini and comprised 17 Ugandans, 10 Rwandans and five commanders from the rebel Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD). Military sources told IRIN Rwandan officials had spoken of preparing for "total war" in DRC in response to a planned reinforcement of troops fighting for President Laurent-Desire Kabila. News reports said Namibian Defence Minister Vincent Mwange had announced his country was sending more forces to DRC, but he refused to divulge numbers. Zambia meanwhile is attempting to organise another summit meeting next week to discuss cessation of hostilities.

Kabila requests return of UN investigation mission, envoy says

The new DRC ambassador to Kenya, Antoine Kyungu wa-ku-Mwanza, said today Kabila has asked the UN to send a team to investigate alleged human rights violations in the country. He told a Nairobi news conference that none of the 450 ethnic groups in DRC has "ever been persecuted" and the "only case of genocide...is the Mbandaka massacres perpetrated by the Tutsis from Rwanda" in 1996/97. He blamed former foreign minster Bizima Karaha, now a leading member of the RCD, for "preventing" the work of the previous UN investigation mission, which was withdrawn by the Secretary-General. The DRC ambassador to the UN, Andre Kapanga, addressing a UN commission recently, also said Kabila had invited a UN team back to DRC.

Meanwhile Kyungu, who was governor of Katanga in the early 1990s when Kasaians were expelled from the province, said the Kabila government was opposed to the current war "which was imposed by Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda". The "door remained open" for troops from other countries to assist his government, he added.

Human rights group says elections impossible

The DRC human rights organisation, Association africaine de defense des droits de l'homme' (ASADHO), has said it will be impossible to hold transparent and multiparty elections in April 1999 as announced by Kabila. In a statement issued this week, the group said "real obstacles" such as the ban on political parties, the lack of constitutional texts regarding an electoral commission and timetable, no population census and financial constraints were hampering the preparation of proper elections. ASADHO concluded by saying that holding elections in the current situation "can only exacerbate the conflict and the cycle of violence".

The DRC ambassador to Kenya meanwhile, told today's news conference Kabila's main concern was to "lead his people to democratic and transparent elections in April 1999". He added that "partial elections" could be organised if parts of the country remained under rebel control during the elections.

New rebel movement in Equateur province

Reports from northern Equateur province speak of a new rebel group, the Mouvement de liberation congolais (MLC). According to Radio France Internationale, the group is led by Jean-Pierre Bemba, whose father, Bemba Saolona, is a leading businessmen who was close to ex-president Mobutu Sese Seko. Sources in contact with the area told IRIN the group had taken Aketi, near Buta, where Chadian soldiers, supporting Kabila, had been "routed". Analysts say the MLC is operating on the side of Rwanda and the RCD.

Chad admits involvement

Contrary to earlier denials, Chad has now admitted it has troops in DRC. Defence Minister Oumar Kadjalami, speaking over Radio France Internationale yesterday, acknowledged there had been clashes late last month on the Aketi-Buta axis after a Chadian reconnaissance patrol was ambushed by rebel troops. According to the minister, 10 Chadians were wounded and two later died of their wounds.

Kalemie reported tense

Humanitarian sources told IRIN today the situation around rebel-held Kalemie is tense, with several attacks reported. Details are sketchy, but people have reportedly been leaving the town via Lake Tanganyika. AFP cited aviation sources as saying DRC and Zimbabwean troops had attacked rebel positions close to the town.

BURUNDI: At least 100 said killed by army

At least 100 people are reported to have been killed by the army earlier this month in a reprisal attack near Bujumbura, news organisations said today. Witnesses were quoted as saying soldiers carried out the attack on Rutovu hill, near Mutambu town, after PALIPEHUTU rebels raided a Tutsi displaced camp in nearby Maramvya. The reports have not yet been independently confirmed, but AP cited army spokesman Colonel Isaie Nibizi who said "based on preliminary information, it appears some civilians were killed in Rutovu". He would not say who was responsible for the killings, AP added.

RWANDA: Thousands of mines defused by army

The army's demining unit has defused nearly 10,000 mines and other explosives throughout the country since it began operating in January 1997, the Rwanda News Agency reported yesterday. The unit's director Major Joshua Mbaraga explained that the worst-affected areas were Byumba, Mutara, Kigali-ville and Kigali-rurale and parts of Ruhengeri. However, rebels active in northwest Rwanda, in general, were not resorting to mines, army officials said. The unit estimates the number of mine victims at 1,500 and called for a programme of support for them, RNA added.

Prisoner releases to go ahead

The Rwandan government yesterday said it would go ahead with the planned release of tens of thousands of genocide suspects, despite protests from survivors, AP reported. The government had earlier announced it would free 31,000 people for whom there were no files or a lack of evidence. Minister in the president's office Patrick Mazimhaka said there was "no option". "We won't succumb to public pressure," AP quoted him as saying.

UGANDA: LRA rebels repulsed by army

Army troops on Sunday repulsed rebels from the Lord's Resistance Army who attacked a village in northern Uganda, the independent 'Monitor' newspaper reported today. The rebels had kidnapped 14 people from a village near Gulu town, but a "fierce and decisive" battle ensued following a rebel raid on the Agoro barracks, according to security sources. Ugandan press reports earlier said up to 300 LRA rebels had entered the north from bases in Sudan.

ERITREA-ETHIOPIA: Djibouti warns Eritrea ties at low ebb

Djibouti has warned Eritrea that bilateral ties risk running into "serious difficulties" after Asmara demanded that Djibouti withdraw from an OAU committee mediating the dispute with Ethiopia. News organisations said Eritrea made the call after accusing Djibouti of siding with Ethiopia, a charge rejected as "slanderous and baseless" yesterday by Djibouti's Foreign Minister Mohamed Moussa Chehem. He said Djibouti was seeking to "reconcile brother-enemies to save the sub-region from the anguish of a new war". Cut off from the Eritrean ports, landlocked Ethiopia is now conducting most of its maritime trade via Djibouti.

Nairobi, 11 November 1998, 15:15 gmt

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REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO (RDC)

Les rebelles sceptiques vis-à-vis de l'accord de cessez-le-feu

Les rebelles et les principaux pays qui les soutiennent ont réagi avec scepticisme à l'accord de cessez-le-feu conclu samedi à Paris par un certain nombre de pays impliqués dans le conflit en RDC. Le dirigeant politique du Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD), Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, a fait savoir dimanche à des agences de presse que le fait que les rebelles aient été exclus des pourparlers de paix mettait en danger la mise en oeuvre de cette trêve. Il a déclaré que ses forces continueraient à se battre jusqu'à ce que des clarifications soient données sur ce pacte. Il a ajouté que la toute première demande du RCD portait toujours sur des pourparlers directs avec le gouvernement de Kinshasa.

Le chef d'une des deux factions rebelles congolaises, Jean-Pierre Bemba, a déclaré mardi que ses forces allaient continuer à se battre en dépit de la tentative d'accord de cessez-le-feu conclu à Paris. M. Bemba, chef du Mouvement de libération congolais (MLC), basé dans la province de l'Equateur, a informé l'agence Reuters qu'il se battait pour la libération totale du pays.

Des sources bien informées en contact avec Aketi, dans la province Orientale, ont informé IRIN que la ville avait été prise par des soldats ougandais du début du mois de novembre après trois jours de violents combats contre les troupes tchadiennes alliées à Kinshasa. Cette information est en contradiction avec les précédentes déclarations de Jean-Pierre Bemba, selon lesquelles son Mouvement de libération congolais (MLC) avait pris Aketi. Ces mêmes sources ont fait savoir que M.

Bemba s'était rendu à Aketi dans un hélicoptère de l'armée ougandaise deux jours après la prise de la ville. Toujours selon ces sources, les soldats ougandais ont joué le rôle déterminant dans la prise par les rebelles de plusieurs autres villes de la région, notamment Banalia le 7 septembre dernier, Isiro, le 20 septembre et Dulia le 29 octobre.

Museveni veut des garanties supplémentaires

Le Président ougandais, Yoweri Museveni, a déclaré samedi lors d'une conférence de presse que Kampala ne retirerait ses troupes que lorsque les arrangements seraient mis en place, pour que les préoccupations sécuritaires de l'Ouganda n'aient plus lieu d'être, a rapporté la radio officielle. Par ailleurs, le Ministre ougandais de la défense, Amama Mbabazi, a minimisé l'importance de l'accord de cessez-le-feu. Il a indiqué à l'AFP que cet accord n'était "en aucun cas une nouvelle décision". M. Mbabazi a déclaré que, bien que les pays étrangers, ayant des forces en RDC, aient consenti à une trêve, cela ne signifiait pas un cessez-le-feu immédiat, dans la mesure où la guerre est menée par des combattants congolais.

Le Président zimbabwéen, Robert Mugabe, a déclaré que les forces alliées soutenant le gouvernement de Kinshasa étaient prêtes à se retirer pour laisser la place à une force conjointe de maintien de la paix de l'ONU et de l'OUA, a rapporté l'Agence sud-africaine de presse SAPA. Il a cependant fait remarquer que la rencontre de l'OUA prévue en décembre était peut-être prématurée, ne laissant pas suffisamment de temps pour mettre au point les détails du cessez-le-feu.

Annan offre l'aide de l'ONU dans la supervision du cessez-le-feu

M. Annan a fait savoir lundi que l'ONU pourrait aider au maintien de la paix en RDC, si toutes les parties se conformaient à la proposition de cessez-le-feu. M. Annan a aidé le Président français Jacques Chirac à finaliser cet accord lors d'une rencontre entre les dirigeants du Burkina Faso, du Tchad, de la Namibie, du Rwanda, de l'Ouganda, de la Zambie, du Zimbabwe et de la RDC.

Mouvements de population dans le Katanga

Des sources humanitaires ont informé IRIN cette semaine que Lubumbashi accueillait actuellement environ 6 000 personnes déplacées et que l'afflux se poursuivait dans cette ville. Un représentant de l'ONU basé à Kinshasa a indiqué que quelque 600 personnes déplacées, habitant deux sites différents à Lubumbashi, recevaient une aide alimentaire et des soins médicaux du CICR et de MSF-Belgique. Les autres vivent dans les familles locales, a précisé ce représentant à l'issue d'une mission d'évaluation effectuée cette semaine dans la ville. La surchage que porte ces familles d'accueil est une source croissante de préoccupation, a-t-il ajouté, indiquant que la plupart de la population locale faisait déjà face à des pénuries alimentaires et de sérieuses difficultés économiques. Un certain nombre de ces déplacés sont passés par la Zambie et entrés à nouveau en RDC afin d'atteindre Lubumbashi. D'autres sont arrivés par train depuis le nord.

Les distributions de nourriture vont se terminer à Kinshasa dans la mesure où les stocks de nourriture de secours sont pratiquement épuisés, a fait savoir le rapport hebdomadaire du PAM. Les commerçants ont également des difficultés pour acheminer des marchandises vers la capitale. Seulement 16 tonnes de nourriture ont été distribuées la semaine dernière. L'opération d'urgence du PAM dans cette ville cible environ 120 000 personnes vulnérables.

BURUNDI

Vingt morts dans un camp de déplacés

Une vingtaine de personnes ont été tuées et 33 autres blessées mercredi lors d'une attaque rebelle sur un camp de déplacés hutus dans la province de Bubanza. Le porte-parole de l'armée a déclaré, selon diverses agences de presse, que c'est la deuxième attaque sur ce

Par ailleurs, l'armée a lancé une opération pour "chasser" les groupes rebelles qui essayent d'occuper des régions dans Bujumbura Rural et Bururi, a déclaré l'AFP jeudi. Les autorités locales ont déclaré que des groupes rebelles avaient récemment infiltré le pays depuis la Tanzanie, ajoutant que deux positions militaires situées à une quinzaine de kilomètres de la capitale avaient été attaquées dimanche par les rebelles.

Couvre-feu et restrictions sur les déplacements dans le sud-ouest

Des sources humanitaires basées au Burundi ont informé IRIN qu'un couvre-feu a été imposé du crépuscule à l'aube sur certaines villes des provinces de Bururi et de Makamba, et que des armes avaient été distribuées à une certaine partie de la population locale. Les autorités ont conseillé aux organisations humanitaires de ne pas se déplacer sur les routes vers Nyanza-Lac et d'autres régions du sud-ouest, ont ajouté ces mêmes sources.

Nyerere prêt à proposer la levée des sanctions

L'ancien président tanzanien, Julius Nyerere, est prêt à proposer que les sanctions régionales contre le Burundi soient suspendues, a rapporté l'agence Reuters. La Secrétaire britannique de la coopération internationale, Clare Short, a déclaré que M. Nyerere, médiateur du processus de paix pour le Burundi, était prêt à recommender la levée des sanctions lors de la prochaine série de pourparlers à Arusha. Mme Short a fait savoir à l'agence de presse que M. Nyerere avait informé dimanche à Bruxelles les ministres de la coopération de l'Union européenne de sa position.

RWANDA

Libération de 76 suspects de génocide

Les autorités de Kigali ont relâché 76 suspects de génocide. Ces personnes sont les premières sur les 10 000 que le gouvernement veut libérer à cause du manque de preuves ou de dossiers incomplets, a rapporté l'Agence rwandaise d'information (ARI). Cette décision a mécontenté les rescapés du génocide. Ils se sont déclarés préoccupés par le fait que ces ex-détenus puissent tuer des témoins éventuels. Les suspects eux-mêmes craignent des représailles instiguées par la vengeance.

Un officier rebelle hutu a été tué et un autre fait prisonnier dans la ville de Rushashi, a rapporté l'AFP. Les deux hommes faisaient partie d'un groupe de scouts en mission de reconnaissance dans la région. Un membre de l'unité de défense civile a également été tué lors des affrontements. Par ailleurs, les autorités de Kigali ont annoncé cette semaine la démobilisation de 3 600 soldats, dans le cadre d'un projet financé par des bailleurs de fonds, afin de réduire les effectifs de l'armée à près de 25 000 homme d'ici l'an 2001. La radio rwandaise a déclaré que les soldats démobilisés comprenaient principalement les soldats agés, les mutilés et ceux qui se sont portés volontaires.

SOUDAN

Les barges du PAM en route pour Juba sur le Nil

Un convoi de barges du PAM a quitté lundi le port de Kosti pour distribuer de la nourriture d'urgence à quelque 392 000 personnes le long du couloir constitué par le fleuve Nil. Dans un communiqué reçu cette semaine par IRIN, le PAM a fait savoir que le convoi allait distribuer 2 500 tonnes de nourriture dans 33 localités différentes aussi bien dans les régions contrôlées par les rebelles que celles sous contrôle gouvernemental, avant d'arriver à Juba au début du mois de janvier.

Turabi démissionne de sa fonction de président du Parlement

L'influent président du Parlement soudanais, Hassan Turabi, a donné sa démission lundi pour travailler à plein temps pour le parti au pouvoir, le 'National Congress', ont rapporté plusieurs agences de presse. Sa démission ne devrait pas réduire son rôle de principal idéologiste islamique du gouvernement, soutenu par l'armée, du Président Omar al-Bashir. Selon l'AP, des analystes politiques ont indiqué que sa démission était une tentative de la part du gouvernement pour apaiser l'opposition avant la légalisation des "associations" politiques l'année prochaine.

Le gouvernement reprend des villes frontalières

Le Soudan a déclaré lundi que ses troupes avaient repris deux positions des forces rebelles près de la frontière avec l'Erythrée, ont rapporté des agences de presse. Un communiqué publié par le gouvernement a indiqué que la reprise de Teluk et de Toqan près de la ville de Kassala survient après celle d'Aqeitai et d'Itairbah dans l'Etat de la Mer Rouge.

Nairobi, vendredi 4 décembre 1998

[FIN]

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IRIN Update No. 731 for Central and Eastern Africa

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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Ugandan troops battle Rwanda-backed RCD in Kisangani

Kisangani was reported calm, but uneasy on Monday after a weekend in which eyewitnesses said at least 14 people died in fighting between Ugandan army forces backing the Kisangani-based faction of the Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD) and the mainstream RCD-Goma. On Sunday morning the commanders of the Ugandan and Rwandan forces - Commander James Kazini, heading the Ugandan troops who support Wamba's rebel faction, and Rwandan Commander Patrick Nyanvumba, whose men support rival leader Emile Ilunga met in an effort to restore calm and appeared to have ordered both groups to stop firing, news agencies reported. It was not clear who controlled the town afterwards though Kazini told 'Radio Liberty' on Sunday he was in charge, according to a press statement by the rival RCD-Goma.

RCD-Goma reported to disrupt Lusaka "explanation tour'"

The fighting broke out on Saturday - with clashes for control of the city centre and one of two airports - after RCD-Goma had disrupted a "tour of explanation" around Kisangani to brief the public on the Lusaka agreement, according to RCD-Kisangani spokesman Sessanga Ipongo, quoted by Radio France Internationale. The clashes were reported by media sources on Monday as an attempt by RCD-Goma to prevent a Zambian delegation from visiting Kisangani to gauge the level of popular support for Wamba dia Wamba. The gun battle closed both of Kisangani's airports and prevented the Zambians from flying in, Reuters news agency reported.

Security Council authorises deployment of military liaison group

The UN Security Council on Friday voted unanimously to authorise the deployment for three months of up to 90 UN military liaison personnel, together with necessary civilian, political, humanitarian and administrative staff, to the Joint Military Commission (JMC) established to supervise the Lusaka ceasefire agreement. The group's mandate is to assist the JMC in developing modalities to implement the ceasefire agreement, provide technical assistance, get assurances of security for any military observers that might be deployed and propose any further role the UN could play once the RCD signs up to the Lusaka accord, a UN release stated. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan,said he was also prepared to recommend a further deployment of up to 500 military observers within DRC and, as required, to other combatant and neighbouring states.

Goma rebels "ready to respond" to alleged Ugandan provocation

In an RCD statement received by IRIN on Monday, the first vice-president and chief military commander, Jean-Pierre Ondekane said Uganda's actions in Kisangani, proved "the will of the Ugandan Army to artificially create a political space for Wamba dia Wamba, former RCD President" and was "a serious provocation against RCD." Ondekane said the RCD (Goma) had previously responded to several "provocations" from Kampala - disarming Ugandan-backed Wamba troops in Beni, Butembo and Bunia and rejecting Uganda's creation of a new province, Kibali-Ituri - and warned national and international opinion that RCD forces "are now ready to respond to any new provocation."

Zambian delegation holds that Congolese want peace

The Zambian delegation - who had travelled to eastern DRC to assess the rebel split, among other things - returned to Lusaka with the firm message that the Congolese people wanted peace, Zambian Minister for Presidential Affairs Eric Silwamba stated. "I have been in Goma and Kisangani, where I met political leaders. The message is the same everywhere: Congolese people want peace," RNA quoted Silwamba as saying. "I will report to President Frederick Chiluba what I have seen during this trip. I will also submit all RCD texts relating to Wamba's removal. Then my President will draw due conclusions." Silwamba also said he had not had any special mission" to meet Wamba, who he failed to meet due to the situation in Kisangani.

Mbeki attempts to give new impetus to Lusaka peace process

Meanwhile, talks are taking place at an "undisclosed" venue in South Africa between President Thabo Mbeki and Presidents Benjamin Mkapa, Yoweri Museveni and Pasteur Bizimungu of Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda, news organisations reported on Monday. "This meeting is part of a diplomatic effort to end the more than 10-month war in the DRC," the BBC quoted Mbeki's spokesman as saying.

Feeding operation for Angolan refugees plagued by transport problems

Poor road conditions and the number of military roadblocks are pushing WFP into using rail transport in order to get food for general and special feeding programmes from Lubumbashi to Kisenge for over 40,000 Angolan refugees in Katanga province, but a scarcity of wagons is causing frequent delays in food dispatches and disrupting planned distributions. The number of Angolan refugees in Katanga numbered 42,990 as of Thursday last, with 24,320 in Kisenge,14,990 in Divuma and 13,670 in Tshimbulumbulu, according to an emergency report by the agency received by IRIN on Monday.

In July, WFP established a new delivery point for Bas-Congo to avoid delays in food dispatches for some 9,000 Angolan refugee camps in Kilueka camp. Meanwhile, poor road conditions have made access to about 4,000 additional refugees accommodated by host families in Bandundu difficult, the report added.

Sudan denies bombing rebel-held towns

The Sudanese military spokesman, Mohamed Osman Yassin, on Saturday denied a DRC rebel claim that Sudanese military aircraft were helping President Laurent Kabila in his war against them. "These are false allegations that are part of a plot for finding excuses for an act of aggression against Sudan," AFP quoted him as saying. He accused Uganda of a "false charge" and said it was "massing its troops in the Equatoria region inside Sudanese territories".

Yassin was reacting to allegations by the leader of the Congolese rebel Mouvement de liberation congolais (MLC), Jean-Pierre Bemba, that two Sudanese Antonovs last Wednesday dropped 18 bombs on the towns of Makanza and Bogbonga, killing over 500 people. Bemba told IRIN on Monday that there was calm in the two towns, but claimed that Congolese government troops were shelling Makanza.

The MLC leader - who last week signed the Lusaka peace accord - said he had not received any reply from the mediator of the DRC peace process, Zambian President Frederick Chiluba, on the course of action he should take following the bombings.

RWANDA: New prosecutor recommended for Arusha tribunal

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has recommended Swiss Attorney-General, Carla Del Ponte, as the new Prosecutor of the UN International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. "I was looking for a strong and experienced prosecutor, and I think she is very good," Annan told reporters.

The nomination has been submitted to the Security Council, which formally appoints prosecutors and judges to the Tribunals, his statement added. Del Ponte will replace departing Prosecutor Louise Arbour, a Canadian judge who has been appointed to her country's supreme court. A date has not yet been set for the Security Council to take action on Del Ponte's nomination.

Genocide suspect to be extradited from US

A US court has found that Elizaphan Ntakirutima, indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), should be extradited to stand trial on genocide-related charges. The US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit made the decision on an appeal from the US District Court for the Southern District of Texas that Ntakirutima should be surrendered to the Tribunal. He has been detained in Texas since his arrest in 1996.

Meanwhile, Rwandan Prime Minister Pierre Celestin Rwigema on Friday called for "punitive measures" against countries harbouring genocide suspects - a move which outgoing ICTR prosecutor, Louise Arbour, said was beyond the power of the Tribunal. Rwigema also wished that the trials could be held at a faster pace, and announced

the government's intention to send law students to the proceedings in Arusha as part of their training.

UGANDA: Army claims successes against ADF rebels

The Ugandan army has claimed to have seized the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels' command base at Kiribata and training centre at Buhira, in eastern DRC, in a new offensive in which at least 2,000 soldiers have been freshly deployed in the Ruwenzori mountains, according to a report in the 'New Vision' newspaper on Saturday. UPDF Divisional Commander Benon Biraro has replied to an ADF request for peace talks to end the four-year rebellion, demanding that they name their proposed mediators, but has vowed to continue the army's operation in the Ruwenzoris "until the date for negotiations is fixed", the report added.

CENTRAL AFRICA: Heads of state call for humanitarian crisis unit

The heads of state of seven central African states have called for the urgent creation of a humanitarian crisis unit to address the needs and implications of war-displaced people in the region. "The problem is particularly the movement of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the Central African Republic and from the Congo Republic towards Gabon. Neither my country nor the Central African Republic, hosts to a large number of refugees, are set up to welcome these brothers and sisters," Reuters news agency quoted host President, Omar Bongo of Gabon, as saying.

In a final communique from Libreville, the Congo Republic, DRC, Gabon, Chad, the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe also attacked "the attitude of the international community which marginalises Africa in general, and Central Africa in particular, by not taking sufficient account of the continent's humanitarian problems."

AFRICA: FAO report says nearly 10 million people need emergency food aid

Nearly 10 million people in sub-Saharan Africa need emergency food assistance, according to a report released on Monday by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). In Somalia alone, "one million people are facing serious food shortages, with over 400,000 at risk of starvation."

The report, Food Supply Situation and Crop Prospects in Sub-Saharan Africa, says the food outlook in Somalia for 1999 and beyond is "extremely grim, due to the cumulative effects of adverse weather, the long running civil war and uncontrolled crop pests and diseases." The current main season cereal crop has failed due to erratic and insufficient rainfall, armyworm outbreaks and unusually high temperatures. It is the seventh consecutive poor harvest since 1996, says the report.

(for more details and breakdown by country, see
http://www.reliefweb.int/IRIN/cea/countrystories/other/19990809.htm)

Nairobi, 9 August 1999 15:30 GMT
[ENDS]

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DRC: Hitch in rebel merger

NAIROBI, 16 January (IRIN) - Congolese rebel movements, which have been holding talks with the Ugandan authorities in Kampala to discuss a merger, have reportedly reached a stalemate, according to one of the groups.

The Bunia-based Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie-Mouvement de liberation (RCD-ML) of Ernest Wamba dia Wamba and Jean-Pierre Bemba's Gbadolite-based Mouvement de liberation du Congo (MLC) have been in Kampala for the last 10 days discussing the merger, an initiative proposed by the Ugandan government.

"The ally [Ugandan government] has imposed a constitutional document on the Congolese which it thinks will work," RCD-ML commissar for external affairs, Claude Pashi, told IRIN on Tuesday. However, he said his group had rejected the document on the basis that it had not been negotiated by the Congolese themselves.

According to Pashi, the Congolese were not given an opportunity to consult and then sit down with the Ugandans and come up with a "joint standardised document". "The document is not based on a consensus. It favours the MLC," he said.

"It has named MLC leader Jean-Pierre Bemba as the president of the union. But we did not debate this," Pashi explained. "This means that Ernest Wamba dia Wamba will be Bemba's deputy." In addition, the document also lists renegade RCD-ML deputies Mbusa Nyamwisi and John Tibasiima Ateenyi, as coordinator and minister for mines and energy, respectively. "These are people who are not recognised as RCD-ML members, how can they be given such prominent posts?," Pashi asked. The two former deputies tried to oust Wamba as RCD-ML leader last November and have since been "disowned" by the movement.

The proposed new rebel movement - known as the Congolese Liberation Front - also names the MLC's Olivier Kamitatu as its secretary-general, and Roger Lumbala - leader of a splinter rebel group known as the RCD-National - as minister for mobilisation. Pashi said the RCD-ML had informed Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni of its refusal to sign the document.

But the MLC is content with the proposed merger. "Adequate consultations were held," MLC leader Jean-Pierre Bemba told IRIN on Tuesday. He denied that the Ugandans were trying to "impose" the document. "What have we been doing here over the past 10 days?," he asked. "Haven't we been consulting amongst ourselves and with the Ugandans?" He said he was willing to work with any group "who sees the need for us to work together against our common enemy".

The semi-official Ugandan 'New Vision' daily on Tuesday quoted Uganda's chief of military intelligence and one of the talks' mediators, Lieutenant-Colonel Noble Mayombo, as saying on Monday that any group unwilling to unite with the others would be left aside. "Uganda wants the rebellion in Congo to merge and to have one territory, one army, one programme, one enemy and to sustain itself economically by organising the resources it controls," Mayombo said.

[ENDS]

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Congo-Kinshasa

Bref Aperçu

Les délégués de Sun City approuvent un projet de plan économique

Masire à la recherche d'un accord à Sun City

Le Gouvernement refuse de déposer la liste des conventions signées durant la période de deux guerres

Une délégation du Département d'Etat attendue ce jeudi à Sun City

Des ONG internationales demandent la suppression de la Cour d'ordre militaire (COM) en RDC

Special Report On Tensions in the Northeast

UN Integrated Regional Information Networks
19 Février 2002
Publié sur le web le 19 Février 2002

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An attack by Lendu militiamen last Friday morning on the Hema village of Kparnganza, north of Bunia town in northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which, according to news organisations, left 200 people dead, constitutes yet another urgent warning that the security situation is deteriorating in the area and could get worse if something is not done to abate it.

"It's the same business that has been going on for the past three years. "There are too many economic interests, too much interest in raw materials - it's a region that has gold, timber and coltan," Reuters quoted a spokesman of the Hema community, Jean-Baptiste Dhetchuvi, as saying at the weekend.

"For the past two days [14 and 15 February], the Lendu have been killing people - we do not know the exact number, but they are [in] dozens," Reuters quoted Uganda's army spokesman, Major Shaban Bantariza, as saying. By Sunday, the Ugandan army had redeployed in the area to quell the clashes, news reports said.

Simmering tension among ethnic groups and among political factions in northeastern DRC is posing a great threat to regional security, and to the Lusaka peace agreement signed in 1999 in particular.

Humanitarian agencies in Bunia, northeastern DRC, have estimated that more than 15,000 people had been displaced in the surrounding area in the past few weeks by ethnic conflict involving the Lendu, Hema and Alur tribes, and among the political factions of several rebel groups.

Fingers are pointing at Uganda, which has maintained a military presence in northeastern DRC ever since 1998, when it sent forces into the DRC to support rebel movements. Uganda is now being blamed for failing to resolve the deteriorating state of affairs in the region. Various sources are even suggesting that Uganda prefers to uphold the status quo to enable it to continue "plundering" the DRC's natural resources.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) last week said Uganda should be held responsible for grave human rights violations and massive human suffering taking place in the territories it was occupying in the DRC.

In a press release, HRW urged the United Nations Security Council, which is this week discussing the UN Secretary-General's latest report on the uncertain security environment in the DRC, to identify the government of Uganda as an important agent of unrest in the eastern part in the country.

It called on the UN mission in the DRC (known by its French acronym, MONUC), to exert maximum pressure on local contenders to cease fighting, and also to send additional military, humanitarian, and human rights monitors to the area.

"Uganda wants to keep enough control to continue getting rich from the Congo, but doesn't want to take responsibility for protecting civilians," said Alison Des Forges, senior adviser for the Great Lakes region at HRW. Ituri Province (in northeastern DRC) is rich in timber, gold and diamonds, among other resources, HRW noted.

It dismissed the assertion made on 1 February by Uganda's defence minister, Amama Mbabazi, to the effect that the situation in Bunia was explosive and required UN military intervention.

"Uganda can't foist responsibility on the UN for restoring order from the chaos it has fostered," Des Forges said. "As the occupying power, under international law, it must protect civilians and stop these killings."